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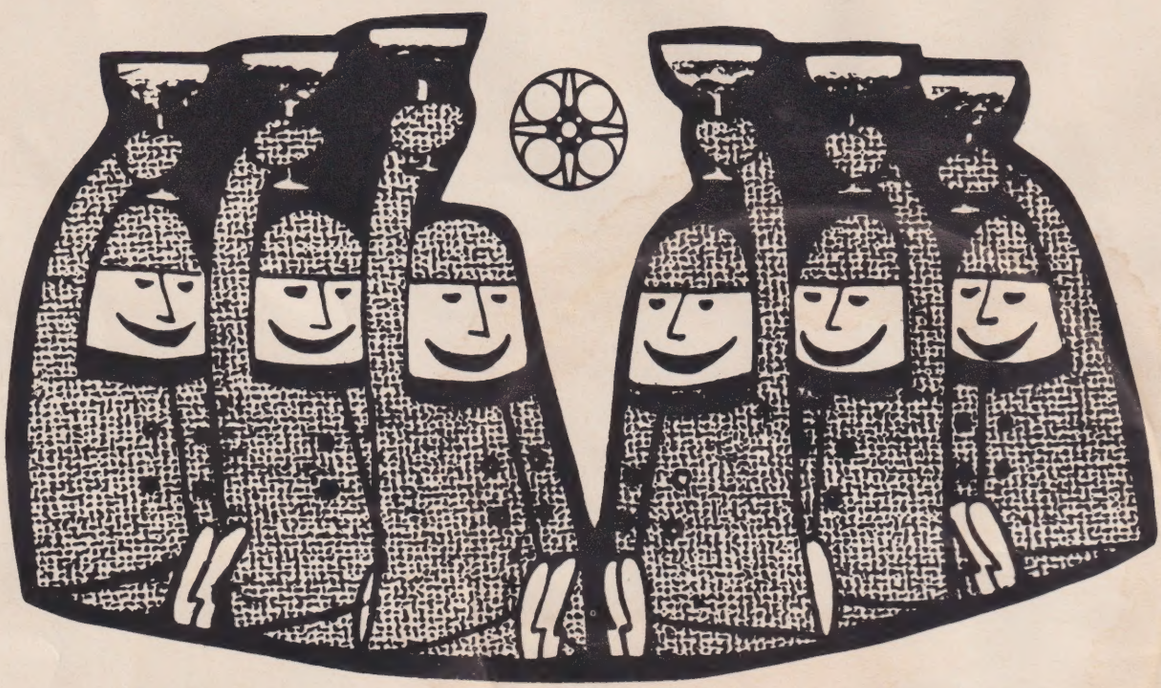
Also:
Costa-Gavras & David Lean

TAKE ONE

Question:
Why did Bodhidharma
come from the West?
See page 8

ZAGREB FESTIVAL



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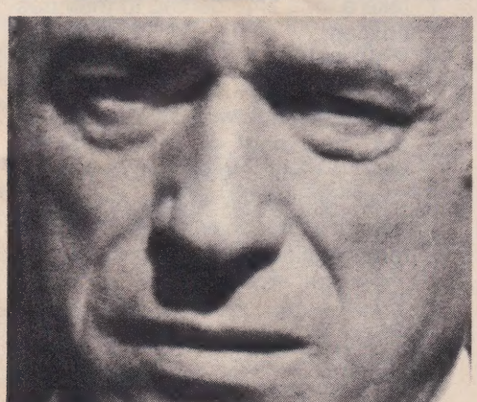
TAKE ONE

Haeee! Gung Fu Movies: a Primer by Richard Hyatt 8

David Lean: A Spirited Defence by Steven Ross 10

"Head" to "Gardens" via "Easy Rider": The Corporate Style of BBS by Mitchell Cohen 19

"Something Pushes Me": Costa-Gavras Talks to Bruce Berman 23



Mean Streets by James Delson 28

Overlooked & Underrated by David Bartholomew, Howard Curle, E. Anderson, Joe Medjuck, Pierre Greenfield, J.A. Thompson 30

Letter from Hollywood by John Dorr 33

Letter from Prison by Albert Nussbaum 36

A Filmmaker's Column by Lenny Lipton 38

Coffee, Brandy & Cigars by Herman G. Weinberg 39

Books by E. Anderson & Glen Hunter 41

Feed-Back 4
Festivals & Competitions 5
The News Page 7
Booker's Guide 34
16mm News 34

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

A Correction

I didn't mean, at least consciously, to write that Eugène Vidocq (Vol. 3 No. 10) was a 19th-century "critic-turned-cop." I meant to write "crook-turned-cop."

Geoffrey Minish
Paris, France

Apropos Poseidon

Although I did not see **The Poseidon Adventure**, I couldn't agree more with Stuart Kaminsky's defense of the so-called American "schlock" director vs. European obscure symbolists (Vol. 3 No. 10). Two of my favorite writers made succinct comments on this very subject.

William Blake: "Obscurity is neither the source of the sublime nor of anything else." Robert A. Heinlein: "Obscurity is the refuge of incompetence."

Many critics also opine that films (or other art forms) that appeal to the *hoi polloi* cannot be taken seriously as art. Have they forgotten about Shakespeare?

David Batterson
Hollywood, Cal. 90038

I found the latest issue most interesting and informative.

I was, naturally, most interested in the review of **The Poseidon Adventure**, in which I have a financial interest. I believe that the insight of the reviewer, Mr. Stuart Kaminsky, and his intuitive sensitivity to what most pictures are all about is one of the most encouraging signs I've seen in many years. I have been in this business for forty-seven years and on many occasions have tried to impart some of the thoughts which Mr. Kaminsky so constructively projects.

I have many friends among the critics, but have never been able to get them to see the light. I could go on with the historical background of pictures that prove the point he makes, but suffice to say that I enjoyed his exposition of some of the weaknesses that critics have shown because of the very nature of their predisposition to judge material from their own biased point of view.

S. Broidy
Los Angeles, Cal. 90069

I should state at the start that I did not only read the critics on **The Poseidon Adventure**; I saw it and thought that it *was* junk.

If Mr. Kaminsky's review spurs others of a similar bent, there is a danger that the well-made, intelligent commercial movie (**The Day of the Jackal**, for instance) will get lost in the critics' shuffle between the latest Losey or Bergman and the newest glorification of some Hollywood hack. Surely the reviewer, having researched a veteran like Don Siegel, should have the foresight to realize that Hollywood pros like Mayes and Silliphant are capable of hack writing. In defending their "folktale" and Ronald Neame's direction, Kaminsky ignores, though, the true creator of **The Poseidon Adventure**, Irwin Allen. It is this man and his wee imagination that is responsible for the stale dramatics of this film. (Its precursors are **The Lost World** and **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** — would Mr. Kaminsky care to defend these as well?)

Ronald Neame is a safe, pedestrian director — that's why Allen hired him — who nevertheless continues to exasperate me with his unevenness. How he can provide tasteful direction for Maggie Smith in **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie** and for Mills and Guinness in **Tunes of Glory** and then descend to the vulgarity of Borgnine, Stevens, and Winters in Mr. Allen's sausage, is both puzzling and depressing.

Howard Curle
Winnipeg

Breaking through in India

You may be pleased to know that I was able to get your Vol.3 No.9 issue in a remote bookstore in New Delhi, of all places (I can't even get one in Chicago!). I read it enthusiastically on the bus here, and was well rewarded . . . *except*:

It's Arthur Axelman. His review of one of the most brilliant books ever to be written about film — *Breaking Through, Selling Out, Dropping Dead and other notes on Filmmaking* — was totally unimpressive.

Earlier this year, I brought the book from Chicago to show my father who is a filmmaker in Bombay. He now calls it The Bible and refers to it whenever he needs some clear thinking to snap him out of a cinematic depression. The book is so perceptive that it applies not only to filmmaking in America, and to filmmaking in India, but to dealing with people in general.

Devendra Rathod
Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Howard Hawks and Chris Nyby

I am writing to correct a misconception in your otherwise excellent article/interview on Howard Hawks in your March issue [Vol. 3, No. 8]. It was I who, in the question-answer period in San Francisco, asked Hawks who had directed **The Thing**. His exact answer, according to my notes, was: "I acted on that film as producer and a sort of casting director. Chris had been one of the cutters on several of my films, and I thought he deserved a chance to direct; and I think he should get the credit for it." Although I did not get a tape recording of Hawks' answer, I am confident that those are his exact words. At any rate, he did not state unequivocally that Nyby and not he had

Readers, subscribers, contributors, advertisers and anyone else in the U.S.A. who has reason to deal with *Take One* through the mails will probably know by now that letters can take a long time getting to their destination.

While, in Canada, a first-class letter mailed from Montreal will be in Vancouver in two days' time (and the magazine — mailed second class — will usually arrive within a week after mailing), our recent experience has shown that an airmail letter mailed from Montreal to New York can regularly take up to two weeks to be delivered, a larger first-class package (of photos, for instance) can take as long as three to four weeks to reach its destination, and regular issues of the magazine can sometimes be in the mail up to six weeks before reaching subscribers in the States!

There are signs that the situation is improving but we ask you all, nonetheless, to bear this in mind when submitting manuscripts, when changing addresses, when enquiring about missing issues, or whatever. — *The Publisher*

ONE THIN DIME, SIDE VIEW

Substantial increases in our production costs (paper and printing have gone up by over 200% in the last year), make it necessary to increase, slightly, the single-copy price of *Take One* to 50 cents. This change will take effect with the next issue (Vol. 4 No. 1) and will — we sincerely hope — be the last price increase we will have to make in some time.

Subscription rates (as noted elsewhere) will be rising proportionately, but the expiry dates of presently-existing subscriptions will not be affected.

We hope our readers will agree that, even at half-a-dollar, *Take One* is a good deal. We will continue our own efforts, in the issues ahead, to make it a good deal better.

—*The Publisher*

directed **The Thing**. I would have pressed him on the subject, because it is one of acute interest to me, had the reply sounded as evasive at the time as it did upon reflection.

Furthermore, in an interview published in a science-fiction magazine, **The Thing**'s star Kenneth Tobey was asked point-blank who had directed the film and no less bluntly answered, "Howard Hawks." He (Tobey) went on to explain that, because it had been Nyby's first film, Hawks was constantly on the set and was constantly advising Nyby in a teacher-disciple relationship. Hawks' modesty on the matter is commendable (he is one of the least arrogant directors I have ever seen) but it is clear, I think, from a comparison of the two men's careers that **The Thing** profited more from Hawks' presence than it did from Nyby's.

Jim W. Lane
Sacramento, Calif.

Cooperative filmmaking?

I might as well start by saying I've been reading your magazine for a while now, and I really like it.

I'm interested in making my own films. I have friends that are interested in doing the same. However, like lots of people who want to do lots of things, we don't have the money.

So, we are thinking of getting a group of people who would like to make films together. If we all chipped in something, we could buy the equipment cooperatively. That's what we'd like to do.

But there have to be rules. Otherwise, different people would want to use the equipment at the same time, and there would be fights. So, we would like to contact people who have done what we would like to do, to find out how they did it. We would like to contact groups of people who have purchased equipment collectively. Can you help us?

Carl Zipper,
Kintnersville, Pa.

Anyone out there have any advice or suggestions for Mr. Zipper? His address is: RD 1, Box 120, Kintnersville, Pa. 18930.

A plea for contact

I realise this is an unusual request, but when one is in need he turns to where there is likely to be aid. So I would greatly appreciate it if you would print this letter in your magazine.

"Blessed be the letters — they are the monitors; they are also the comforters."

I'm a prisoner at the Southern Ohio Correction Facility at Lucasville, Ohio. I just received two added years from the parole board after doing 44 months. In the last year I have lost all contact with the free world. As this is a fact, I can't see myself making it through these next two years without contact with reality (freedom). So I send my plea for correspondence out to you, the readers of this magazine.

I am black. 27 years old. 5'11" at 165 pounds. I would like to correspond with anyone, regardless of age, sex, or race. I will answer all letters and cards. Address all mail to:

Lincoln Heard
#134-115, Box 787
Lucasville, Ohio 45648

Terence Fisher's other films

Harry Ringel's critique (Vol.3 No.9) was quite simply the finest evaluation of Terence Fisher's Gothic Hammers that I have ever read.

Fisher himself, however, deserves a longer looking at. Compare such gems as **Horror of Dracula** and **The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll** to his later science-fiction work, such as **Night of the Big Heat** and **Island of Terror**, and we have a clear picture of Fisher's limitations: his true gift lies in the ability to re-arrange existing patterns in such a way that they appear new or at best, novel and "fresh," a term which often applied to his films.

This is why his later films, those possessing an SF quality, seem bland and unrelated in style (unless drudgery can be considered a stylistic element).

Fisher, robbed of the talents of Jimmy Sangster, placed in the emotionally sterile world of science-fiction, and, what's worse, stranded in the one genre traditionally devoid of definite structure, could do nothing but push the actors through their lines.

The effect of these films on Fisher's style is obvious. **Frankenstein Must be Destroyed** is a humorless, terrifying film, devoid of even a hopeful love interest, quite unlike **The Curse of Frankenstein** or **The Revenge of Frankenstein.**

Fisher aside, let's see some more of Harry Ringel!

Lon Johnston
Novato, Calif.

FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS

April 10 is the deadline for entries in the **Geneva College Film Competition**, which is open to student-made films in 16mm, 8mm or super-8. Questions? Write: Dr. Norman Carson, Geneva College Film Competition, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa. 10510.

The San Francisco Public Library will be holding its second **Festival of Young Filmmakers** January 18 through 19 (entry deadline, January 5). There'll be $500 in prizes and entry forms can be obtained from: Cynthia Lingo, Office of Adult Services, San Francisco Public Library, Civic Center, S.F. Ca. 94102.

There are over $2000 in cash prizes to be won at the First Annual **Penn State Invitational Juried Film Festival**, which is open to student filmmakers in Pa., Md., N.J., W.V., N.Y., Ohio, and D.C. The organizers can be reached via The Graduate Student Association, Pennsylvania State University, 305 Kern Building, University Park, Pa. 16802 (814-865-9061).

The Fifth International **Experimental Film Competition**, organized by the Royal Film Archive of Belgium, is to be held December 25, 1974 through January 2nd, 1975. Sound or silent films, in 16mm or 35mm, may be entered and there are interesting prizes. Deadline is Sept. 1 of 1974. Entry forms from the Secretariat at: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 23 Ravenstein, 1000 Brussels.

The Rochester International Amateur Film Festival invites amateurs to submit their films (8mm, super-8, 16mm; silent or sound; any length) for the 16th annual **Movies on a Shoestring** film festival, to be held May 4. Deadline is March 23, and more data can be had from: Box 7604, Rochester, N.Y. 14622.

Filmex, the Los Angeles International Film Exposition, will — as of 1974 — be the first accredited international film festival of the calendar year, held March 21 through 31. Any filmmakers who want further information should write the Director, Gary Essert, at 7000 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, Ca. 90028 (213-461-4348).

The 22nd International **Competition for Mountain and Exploration Films** is to be held, April 28 through May 4, in Trento, Italy. There are cash prizes, trophies and plaques to be won. Write the festival at Via Belenzani, 3, 38100 Trento, Italy.

A **Super-8 Film Festival** is to be held in New York on February 7. January 14 is the deadline. Contact: Richard Brill, Professional Building, Route 9, Parlin, N.J. 08857.

December 31 is the deadline for entries in the **London Amateur Film Festival**. The contact in the colonies is: Miss Emma Basche, 248 Mt. Vernon St., West Newton, Mass. 02165.

The National Film Board of Canada

proudly salutes its film-makers for winning 16 Etrogs at the 25th Annual Canadian Film Awards 1973

Best TV Drama

The Sloane Affair

Doug Jackson, Director-Producer

Winner of four Awards

Best Direction

Doug Jackson

Best Screenplay

Doug Jackson and Alvin Goldman

Best Art Direction

Denis Boucher

Best Non-fiction Feature Film

Coming Home

Bill Reid, Director-Producer

Best Animated Film

The Family That Dwelt Apart

Yvon Mallette, Director
Wolf Koenig, Producer

Best Theatrical Short

Goodbye Sousa

Tony Ianzelo, Director-Producer

Best Documentary

Grierson

Roger Blais, Director
David Bairstow, Producer

Best TV Information Public Affairs

The Ungrateful Land

Cynthia Scott, Director
Ian McLaren, Producer

Certificate of Merit for Overall Excellence

Ratopolis

Gilles Thérien, Director
François Séguillon, Producer

Best Performance by an Actor Feature Film

Jacques Godin

O.K. ... Laliberté

Best Sound Re-recording

Michel Descombes

Le vent

Best Non-dramatic Script

André Melançon

Des armes et les hommes

Best Performance by an Actor Non-feature

Marcel Sabourin

Des armes et les hommes

Best Sound Recording Non-feature

Richard Besse
Jacques Chevigny

Station 10

Best Cinematography Information Films

Pierre Letarte

The Ungrateful Land

Grierson Award

Robert Forget

Director of *Videographe*, an innovation of the Société nouvelle/Challenge for Change Program

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National Film Board of Canada **Office national du film du Canada**

The News Page

The truth 24 times per second.

From the marquee on a Plainview, Long Island theatre recently: **Hitler — The Last of the Red Hot Lovers**.

Five defendants accused in a Fort Worth court of conspiring to violate state pornography laws by showing **Deep Throat** in a theatre there, have been found guilty and each handed a $5000 fine and five years in prison! District Attorney Tim Curry stated that he expected the sentences to have one whale of a deterrent effect on the operators of X-rated theatres. Come on you guys, don't you have the death penalty down there?

Richard Lester has completed shooting, now, on **The Three Musketeers** and there must have been times when he wondered why he ever started. Oliver Reed managed to get into such a brawl at the bar of the Madrid Hilton that it required four policemen to overpower him. He was asked to leave the Castellana Hotel after he reportedly disturbed fellow guests by stamping and shouting, "I am Athos. I'm the best in the world and I can prove it!" Co-star Raquel Welch, for her part, withdrew from the production, citing "creative and artistic differences," then reneged when co-producer Pierre Spengler flew to Hollywood to twist her arm (and, incidentally, to sound out Liza Minnelli if Raquel wouldn't see reason). It turned out that, although young English Oscar-winner Yvonne Blake designed the costumes for everyone else, Raquel insisted that boyfriend Ron Talsky do hers.

At this point in time: Roger Corman has bought Jay Burton's screenplay, **Watergate: The Game that has Something for Everybody**, and is casting a lot of (needless to say) comedians. But Italian director Elio Petri is also planning to shoot **The Watergate Scandal** in the U.S. and Rome this fall. And meanwhile, producer Don Rugoff and Shirley MacLaine are trying to convince Costa-Gavras (**State of Siege** and **Z**) that he ought to do a film on the subject.

After three years of fund-raising, shooting, fund-raising, editing, and fund-raising, Montreal documentary-maker Jerry Bruck has completed his film on the journalistic legend, **I.F. Stone**. The 62-minute film has already been held over in its Washington and New York theatrical showings. (The film, said *The Times'* Vincent Canby, "is such a thorough delight it left me feeling the way other people said they felt after seeing **The Sound of Music**. That is, quite high.") Bruck is sticking true to form by distributing the film himself. In the U.S., he can be reached through I.F. Stone Project, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417 (201-891-8240). In Canada, he can be contacted through *Take One*.

Follow-Up:

Item 1: Despite what we said in the News last issue, at least one of **American Graffiti**'s stars (Rick Dreyfuss, who played Curt) informs us that he still has some free time in his acting schedule for the months ahead (once, that is, he completes work in the title role of Mordecai Richler's **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz**). **Graffiti** director George Lukas and producer Gary Kurtz, meanwhile, are scheduled to film **Radioland Murders** (an original comedy set in 1938) for Universal, as soon as they finish **The Star Wars** for 20th-Fox. And Paul LeMat has traded in his deuce coupe for the starring role in **Bobby and Rose**.

Item 2: Ray Bradbury (our cover interview last issue) has been signed to write the basic structure and format for an NBC movie and series-pilot entitled **The Survivors** (about the ways life on Earth changes after a cataclysmic explosion that alters the physical structure of the world!).

Item 3: **David Lean** (discussed this issue) was awarded the Directors Guild of America's highest honour — the D.W. Griffith Award — this October. (Lean thus joins a select list that includes such other directors as Cecil B. DeMille, John Ford, King Vidor, Frank Capra, George Stevens, Alfred Hitchcock and William Wellman.)

Item 4: **Cannibal Girls** (the making of which was our cover story two issues ago) won two out of the seven prizes awarded at this year's Sitges (Spain) festival of fantasy and horror films. Best Actor went to Eugene Levy and Andrea Martin was named Best Actress. The film has now been sold to Germany, France, Belgium, the U.K., Spain, Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland for a total of more than $50,000 (it played ten theatres in Los Angeles — double-billed with **Raw Meat** — for a total gross of $60,000 in the first week). Dan is producing another LP, and Ivan has put together a magic-cum-music show, called **Spellbound**, that opens in Toronto late December.

Starting January, Films Inc. will have available, in 16mm and 35mm, Bergman's award-winning **Cries and Whispers** for U.S. college exhibition.

Kodak is offering a **free "Animation Poster"**, containing the scribbles and doodles of leading U.S. animators — including Mogubgub and Hubley. Write: L.G. Paulini, Motion Picture and Education Markets Division, Eastman Kodak Company, 343 State Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14650 (mention *Take One*).

America's first family of tv, **the Louds**, have signed with literary agents (Lance with International Famous Agency), and are said to be writing books on the notorious show.

There is a new Algerian wine on the market called **Raquel** that's advertised as being, "full-bodied, well-rounded, fruity and powerful."

The almost simultaneous publication, this fall, of three books about **Marilyn Monroe** has set Twentieth Century-Fox combing its vaults for a re-issue package to cash in on the renaissance (20th's Monroe library includes **All About Eve, Seven-Year Itch**, and **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes**). MGM has already decided against reviving **Asphalt Jungle**, the film in which Monroe made her break-through to stardom.

Production Notes from All Over: Ken Russell is directing **Mahler Lives** (about Gustav Mahler). Next on his schedule is **The Hot War, Cold War Man**, starring Oliver Reed. ... Tuesday Weld and Charles Knox Robinson share top billing in Hal Landers and Bobby Roberts' screen version of Roger Zelasny's sci-fi thriller, **Damnation Alley**. ... Alfred Hitchcock is preparing his fifty-third film, a contemporary suspense drama being written by Ernest Lehmann. ... Alain Resnais has started **Stavisky**. Based on a famous political assassination, the film stars Jean-Paul Belmondo, Francis Perrin and Charles Boyer....Terence Young will begin shooting, early in 1974, on the film version of John Le Carré's novel, **A Small Town in Germany**.... Faye Dunaway and Jack Nicholson are starring in Paramount Pictures' **Chinatown**, to be directed by Roman Polanski (his first film in the U.S. since 1968's **Rosemary's Baby**). ... Ivan Passer will direct *All in the Family's* Carroll O'Connor in a film (written by Passer) tentatively titled **Law and Order**. Shooting to start in April. ... David Frost will produce, and Gordon Parks will direct, **Leadbelly** — based on the life of the late, famous, black folk singer. ... Robert Altman and Elliott Kastner have acquired the film rights to Thomas McGuane's new novel, **Ninety-Two in the Shade**. ... **July Pork Bellies** (Peter Yates directing Barbra Streisand) has had its name changed to **For Pete's Sake**. ... And Claude (**A Man and a Woman**) Lelouch has staked his own personal fortune, as well as his reputation, on his latest project, **Toute Une Vie** (**A Lifetime**). It's an epic love story set against the twentieth century's history-making events and is to be shot in France, Italy, Moscow, Hong Kong, Egypt, Jerusalem and Africa on a $6,000,000 budget. Alain Delon and Marthe Keller star as the lovers, but there'll be some 300 roles in the three-hour film. The evolution of the cinema will be incorporated as the film proceeds from 1900 through to the year 2000, while some $400,000 has been spent to acquire rights to the hit songs of the past 70-odd years. Lelouch, 36 years old, says, "It's a film I've thought about since my start in cinema more than a dozen years ago."

Question: Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?

Answer: To kick ass!

An Introduction to Gung Fu Movies

The bamboo grove glows with the serenity of a cathedral at vespers. Hardly the place for a duel.

An old man in the robes of a Taoist hermit is meditating in the heart of the grove. At first glance he seems not to be here at all, so empty is his countenance. Far to his rear, a second figure enters the grove, quietly, considerate of the tranquility that is here. He too is an old man, wearing a hermit's robes. He stops before the seated figure and the sage of the bamboo grove speaks. "I knew you would come."

A flock of birds breaks from its perch, broken bamboo leaves flutter to the ground. The two old men seem not to notice. He who has come says nothing, but respectfully raises his right hand in a clenched fist, covering it with his open left hand. The sage rises, sighs with the resignation of one who wishes, perhaps, that this meeting might not have to take place. Then he returns the salute.

The old men widen their stances and touch the backs of their right hands together. Motionless, they stand thus for a timeless minute. It seems that at any moment one or the other will detect a split-second of straying concentration — and strike. Then, for no apparent reason, they part hands and salute again. The man who has come parts his lips in a faint smile, and a narrow rivulet of blood streams from the corner of his mouth. His internal organs. He turns and walks away, unhurriedly, to a peaceful death. The sage resumes his posture and, in an instant, is lost in meditation. The bamboo grove is once again the picture of peace.

Battle scenes in gung fu movies run the gamut from this silent but deadly encounter to the most far-flung, heroic swash-buckling imaginable, with one young man and his trusty sword against the teeming legions of evil. Possibly you're already interested in martial arts, or you're one of those film fanatics who'll go see anything in the constant search for a new genre. Or maybe you just like a good action flick. In any case, you may find Chinese gung fu movies a rewarding form of entertainment — if you know what to look for and where to look for it. On the other hand, if you go to a gung fu movie without knowing what to expect you may be sorely disappointed.

You've probably seen some of the Japanese samurai movies that play the repertory houses, or the currently popular *Kung Fu* television series. Perhaps you liked what you saw and think, on that basis, that you're ready to move on to a Friday night session at a Chinatown theater. You're not.

Neither the samurai flicks nor the TV series have prepared you in the slightest for gung fu movies. The great Japanese films like **Seven Samurai, Hara Kiri** and the **Samurai Trilogy** are truly fine films — art in every respect. They offer complex structure, good acting, imaginative cinematography, meaningful story lines and, of course, top-rate Japanese martial arts. The first few episodes of TV's *Kung Fu,* modelled as they were on the Japanese samurai flicks, had all of these qualities going for them too (including, by the way, Japanese — not Chinese — martial arts). Gung fu movies are something else altogether.

Gung fu movies are an extremely limited genre. They have one thing, and one thing only, going for them: gung fu. (Often, in fact, everything else is going *against* them.) Still, if it's all they've got, gung fu is enough — at least when it's cooking. Action is what you go to see and, if you know how to pick your movie, action is what you'll get. There is only one aesthetic principle for appraising these films, and it's very simple: if the gung fu is lousy, or if there isn't enough of it, the movie stinks.

Gung fu is a complex, classical art form with millennia of history and evolution behind it. So to really get into these films, you should know something about the history and tradition surrounding gung fu, as well as a little about gung fu as pure movement. It's something like going to the ballet.

First: history, tradition and story lines: There are two myths of origin in the Chinese martial arts, corresponding to the two major schools: the hard school (characterized by speed and strength) and the soft school (characterized by balance and coordination). The hard school is reputed to have begun with the arrival of the Chan (or, in Japanese, Zen) patriarch Bodhidharma at the Shaolin Temple in Honan province during the early Tang dynasty (around 600 A.D.). Bodhidharma was a robust individual, and a member of India's warrior caste. When he arrived at the Temple he was so appalled at the degenerated condition of the Shaolin monks that he immediately instituted an extensive program of vigorous exercise: the famous Shaolin style of boxing (from which karate later evolved). Because of its effectiveness as a martial art, the secrets of Shaolin boxing were only passed on to individuals deemed morally fit to deal with the power they provided.

The soft school (of which Tai Chi Chuan is best known) finds its origin in the Taoist sage Chang San Feng of the early Sung dynasty (1127-1279 A.D.). Once, while meditating in his garden, he observed a fight to the death between a hawk and a snake. The elusive movements of the snake, who was the winner of the bout, inspired Chang to formulate a system of boxing which he developed along the lines of the Taoist philosophy expounded in the *I Ching*. Just as with

By Richard Hyatt

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the hard styles, knowledge of this system was withheld from the general populace, and handed down with selectivity.

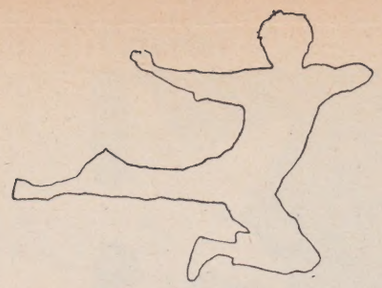
So, from the very beginnings of both schools there was a common tradition that emphasized guarding the "secrets" and dispensing the teachings with reserve and selectivity. Naturally, the very existence of this tradition implies that there are persons of low moral character who would learn the secrets by any means possible — so that they might employ them for personal gain. From this single conflict most of the variations on the basic gung fu story line can be derived.

There are two prototypical plots which are most frequently utilized. 1) Some bad guy, maybe an ex-classmate gone astray, has ripped off the school's secrets, and he's using them to oppress the people. The hero must put an end to this injustice, cleanse the name of the school, and restore the reputation of his teacher. 2) Some bad guy has killed the hero's teacher, usually by means of treachery, with the most common motive being jealousy. (Variations may substitute father, mother, girlfriend, boyfriend, oppressed peasant, virtuous mandarin, or any combination of these as the unfortunate victim.) The hero must then *bao chou,* a phrase that comes up quite often in gung fu movies, meaning "take revenge."

Good gung fu is a joy to behold. It has all the visual dynamics of dance, and the breath-taking excitement of acrobatics. Look for flexibility: kicks that go face-high while the hero's other foot remains planted firmly on the ground. Look for surprise punches that go in a different direction than you expect, kicks that change direction in mid-air to strike two separate opponents, blows struck with parts of the body you never imagined fighting with — elbows, forearms, palms, fingertips, foreheads. Look for brawls wilder than anything you've ever seen — even in the best John Wayne movies.

The most popular gung fu forms are the hard styles — there are as many as 125 variations on the Shaolin theme. On the other hand, there are only about half a dozen soft styles. Of course, with their dazzling visual dynamics the hard styles are more suitable for the film medium — and this insures their popularity with scriptwriters and directors. Almost the only time you will see any soft style is during encounters with heavy psychological build-up — like the scene in the bamboo grove. Such scenes are relatively rare, however.

Although the hard Shaolin styles reign supreme, there is still a lot more soft technique in *all* gung fu than in the Japanese martial arts. The emphasis in karate, for instance, is on the big punch theory that suggests if you land one big punch you've got it. Rather than put all the eggs in one basket, and rely solely on strength and aggressiveness, the Chinese martial arts model themselves on the yin yang principle tempering strength with softness. So when a big gun fires one off, you don't contend with it — you yield, side-step, then while he recoils you blast him and retreat to safety.



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Thus the Chinese arts emphasize continual recovery. (It's something like position pool.) They hold that you can do more with a volley than you can with one shot.

There is also a lot of variety in terms of what's cricket and what's not. In your average samurai flick you get classic Japanese kendo swordplay, limiting the fencers to seven acceptable blows. Any blow that misses the mark reflects the epitome of bad taste. Why this extreme stylization? Japan is a tiny island where people live close together, and Japanese civilization functions only because the people can agree on certain rules of etiquette.

China, on the other hand, is one of the largest countries in the world, with a current population of over 700 million. It's hard enough to follow the dialects, let alone agree on "rules" of martial etiquette. Who knows what those crazy bandits in the next province might have up their sleeves? Furthermore, anything goes in terms of weaponry. Just when I think I've seen them all, somebody pulls out yet another weird contraption. You can expect anything from swords to retractible grappling hooks on long chains. And poison darts. It's all within the bounds of good taste.

Any gung fu movie worth its salt shows the action in close-up detail and extended takes; the best actors are always martial artists first, and movie actors second. (Only to be expected, since in China training in gung fu and acrobatics is a basic prerequisite for a career in show biz.) It's a sure sign of a crummy gung fu movie when the hero and the villain square off and then, just when you're expecting a beautiful set of moves, the scene cuts to a close shot of the hero punching out the camera. If the actors are any good, the fight will be shown in complete long shots so you can appreciate their form and grace. Camera trickery and fast cutting (to *simulate* a fight) is only necessary when the actors can't cut it.

Another shuck to look out for is when the boys face off on a battlefield full of combatants and then the camera pulls back for a long shot of 2000 extras waving their swords frantically in the air. (Run Run Shaw is notorious for this. Don't worry, you'll find out who Run Run Shaw is in the fullness of time.)

The best way to learn to recognize what good gung fu looks like is to go to films starring some of the better fighters. Names to look for on the Chinatown marquees are Ti Lung, Chung Kwan Tai, Chen Hsing, Meng Fei, Bai Piao, Lo Lieh, Yueh Hua and, in the ladies' category, Cheng Pei Pei, Chin Ping, Li Lin Lin, Shangkuan Lingfung, Chiao Chiao and Angela Mao. (That's right: leading ladies who slug it out right alongside the men. It's an old tradition in the Orient.)

The late Bruce Lee is currently reigning as the dean of Chinese boxers. Not only was he a great fighter (having proven himself in martial arts tournaments before going into show biz) but he was a pretty good comedian as well — combining elements of Jerry Lewis and Buster Keaton. What with the current fad kicked off by the TV show (not to mention the astounding international box office success of gung fu flicks) five major American studios offered Lee contracts. Warners won out, and thus we are faced with **Enter the Dragon** — the first and (so far) only English-language gung fu movie. Surprisingly it's pretty good, and we recommend it as a first gung fu movie. It will give you a good idea of what to expect when you see the real thing, and you can catch it at your neighborhood theatre.

Bruce Lee's other (Chinese) films are also highly recommended, though they should be avoided in their dubbed versions. See them in Mandarin as **The Big Boss** and **Fists of Fury**. And, as long as we're dealing in generalities, avoid like the plague any movies produced by Run Run Shaw, unless you've heard specifically that they're good from an informed source. Shaw cranks out movies like sausages, and generally they're all exactly the same — with lousy gung fu to boot.

There is one more thing you should know about gung fu movies. Be prepared for some thoroughly outrageous special effects illustrating feats of athletic prowess: leaping, hurling projectiles and punching. These special effects are (to put it mildly) exaggerated well beyond belief. The point is that they are not *meant* to be believed. Anyone familiar with traditional Chinese theater or the Peking Opera style will recognize the poetic license here.

The Chinese martial arts employ subtle principles of motion physics to achieve seemingly "miraculous" results. Even if you're paying close attention you may be hard-pressed to explain what happened. A merely truthful recounting never seems to suffice, so filmmakers (as well as other artists) are understandably drawn toward exaggeration to reproduce the original sense of wonder. Chinese people are accustomed to it. For Westerners, who tend to believe that films are real events, it takes some getting used to.

So, now you know all the rules and you're ready for that Friday night session with a gung fu movie. By all means go whole hog: Don't waste your time with the English-dubbed Chinese flicks at the drive-in; catch the real thing at a Chinatown theater. And be sure to take a bag of cha-shu-bao.

END

IN DEFENCE OF DAVID LEAN

David Lean's gradual descent from a reputation of high critical esteem to one of disrepute is indicative of the changing critical attitudes towards the "prestige" film. Indeed, a brief historical summary of Lean's career constitutes a fascinating case history of a director who conformed to the critical standards of his era, reaped the benefits of such conformity, and then became one of the most maligned victims of the vicissitudes of critical priorities.

At a time when prestige meant everything, Lean, a top British film editor throughout the '30s, turned down numerous opportunities to direct low budget quota quickies during that decade, electing instead to bide his time until a truly prestigious opportunity came along. That big break occurred in 1942, when he was given the chance to co-direct **In Which We Serve** with Noel Coward. The film was an enormous critical and popular success, albeit universally thought of as a Coward film, and as a result Lean's name stayed out of the limelight. He continued to play it safe and stayed with his mentor through two faithful adaptations of Coward stage successes, **This Happy Breed** and **Blithe Spirit** (1944). He received sole directorial credit for these films, and their theatrical respectability helped strengthen his name among British film circles. In 1945, his last Coward adaptation, **Brief Encounter**, made him an international name to be reckoned with.

His reputation now secure, he broke off his association with Coward, but significantly, he moved on to an even more hallowed British institution, Charles Dickens. His two Dickens adaptations, **Great Expectations** (1946) and **Oliver Twist** (1948) were widely hailed as the most evocative, tasteful, and beautifully mounted Dickens films ever made. His next two films

By Steven Ross

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Dr. Zhivago (1965)

however, **The Passionate Friends** (1949; American title: **One Woman's Story**) and **Madeleine** (1950), were not based on any revered British stage or literary institution, and they did not deal with "important" subjects; not surprisingly, the critics who had previously hailed Lean as perhaps Britain's most important young director were deeply disappointed by these films. However, **Breaking the Sound Barrier** (1952) was a film concerned with a monumental subject, with a script by a noted playwright (Terence Rattigan), and starring one of England's most respected actors (Ralph Richardson). The film was praised as a major comeback for Lean, won the British Academy Award for Best Picture, and Richardson won the New York Film Critics' award for his performance. **Hobson's Choice** (1954), Lean's sole venture into comedy since **Blithe Spirit**, was based on the well-known Harold Brighouse play, and again won him the British Oscar for Best Picture.

In 1955 he left Britain to film **Summertime** (British title: **Summer Madness**) in Venice, and though there was some harping that the novelettish, romantic subject matter of an American spinster's bittersweet affair with a Venetian lothario was beneath such a director's talents, the film's stunning pictorial quality won Lean his first New York Film Critics' Award for Best Director; his star, Katherine Hepburn, was nominated for an Oscar. Lean then went on to make his two super-spectacle adventure epics, **The Bridge on the River Kwai** (1957) and **Lawrence of Arabia** (1962). It was widely agreed that these were the most tasteful and intelligent of the "big" films. Meticulously composed, carefully edited, well acted, and always exhibiting a thoughtful, anti-heroic sensibility, these films boosted Lean's reputation as one of the best-known, most prestigious directors in the world, and he became laden with the trappings of Oscars, critics' citations, and international awards that are a prerequisite for such a reputation.

But by then the reaction against the prestige-literary tradition had made itself felt in both England and America, and Lean was one of the first sacred cows to bear the brunt of the auteur-

Lean was one of the first sacred cows to bear the brunt of the auteurists' wrath.

ists' wrath. By the time Andrew Sarris had assigned him to the "Less Than Meets the Eye" strata of directors, Lean had been convicted, without a real trial (and certainly without any meaningful defense) as a dull academic, a quality hack with no personal vision and no distinguishing style outside of a relentless drive to make every frame as lifelessly perfect and technically polished as possible.

The crumbling foundation of Lean's reputation was further shaken with the release of his **Doctor Zhivago** in 1965. The old-guard, "prestige"-oriented critical establishment suddenly abandoned him, and almost universally condemned the film as an episodic, naive, and glamorized bowdlerization of a great novel. His sole subsequent film, **Ryan's Daughter** (1970), received an only slightly warmer reception. Lean, it was said, had been cursed with an ever increasing case of directorial elephantitus, and **Ryan's Daughter** was described as a **Brief Encounter** type of small love story filmed as if it were **Lawrence of Arabia** . . . or, in Pauline Kael's terms, "**Ecstacy** blown up to the scale of **The Fall of the Roman Empire**." The only people left to propagate Lean's mystique as a great director were the people running Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's publicity machine.

Lean certainly served as an ideal target for the auteurists. He is indeed in many ways a very formal, academically-oriented director whose limitations include a definite lack of the kind of idiosyncratic human qualities that distinguish the work of the auteurists' pantheon. Hawks' spontaneity and stoicism, Hitchcock's sardonic humor, and Ford's warmth are all aspects of these directors that flow directly and intuitively from their personalities. Lean's work may lack this particular sort of personal imprint. However, there is surprisingly little serious published criticism attacking his work in any kind of analytic fashion. And on careful analysis, there is an undeniable, meaningful thematic unity, coupled with a highly individual stylistic and formal consistency, that runs throughout his work. The ultimate value of this primarily favorable critical re-evaluation of Lean's work may be that it will prompt some of his better-known, most severe critics to repudiate it in a careful, responsible fashion. Surely a director who has been such a strong presence among filmmakers of the past thirty years deserves at least that much.

Lean's films reveal a consistently tragic vision of the romantic sensibility attempting to reach beyond the restraints and constrictions of everyday life. It is the inevitable clash between the powers of normalcy — represented not only by the character's society, but also by the desire within the character for stability, security, and the need to share his life with other people — against the character's striving to reach beyond the ordinary, that gives Lean's films their conflict and their ultimately tragic vision.

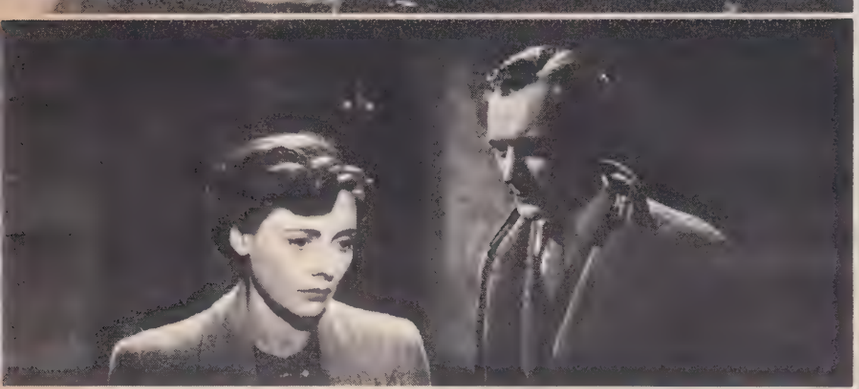
In what can be loosely termed his "adventure" films, **Breaking the Sound Barrier, Bridge on the River Kwai**, and **Lawrence of Arabia**, we can see the progression of this theme. These films take us to the limits of human possibilities, to the no-man's land where commitment is so complete and irrevocable that there is no turning back. Lean's use of exotic locales goes hand in hand with this theme. By placing us far away from the immediate mundane world of our everyday experiences, these settings not only provide new phenomena, but place us in situations that deprive us of stability and security. Problems that never concern us in the course of our lives suddenly present themselves because of this drastic switch in locale, and perfectly suitable solutions to other problems suddenly become wildly unsuitable. This disorientation is essential to these films, and is one reason why we must be careful in referring to Lean's use of "exotic" locales. These films are exotic not in the sense of the picture postcard backdrops of **Song of Norway, Two for the Road**, or **Live and Let Die**, but in a truly profound sense of feeling the tangible presence of a setting act upon a character in a singular fashion.

Viewing these films, we are excited by the spectacle of characters daring to break their ties with the rest of humanity, but we are also frightened by the terrible price they have to pay for their actions. The three films form a progression in which each central character moves further away from the confinements — and consolations — of everyday life. In **Sound Barrier**, Sir John Ridgefield cuts himself off from the rest of the world in his obsession to achieve what no man has ever done before . . . build a plane capable of breaking the speed of sound. His single-minded pursuit of this goal takes the lives of his son and son-in-law, yet he does not give up until he reaches it. But when he is at the brink of achieving the goal he has devoted his life to, he breaks down in tears and begs his daughter to stay with him in the empty, cavernous control room, while the reports of the test pilot approaching the speed of sound blare ominously over the loudspeaker. At this moment, when the glorious possibilities of life are finally to be reached, he realizes that in daring to travel outside the previously accepted bounds of humanity and break into his own experience, he has also entered the realm of madness.

Ridgefield is lucky. He achieves his dream and is able to return to the security of human companionship, in the presence of his daughter and grandchild. The central character of **The Bridge on the River Kwai**, Colonel Nicholson, is not so lucky. Here the inextricable mingling of commitment and greatness with a kind of madness is more completely realized. Nicholson has triumphed over his captors, he has endured with honor and dignity a situation in which almost any other man would have been broken. Yet he has also built a bridge for the enemy that is far better than anything they could have built themselves, and in the end is responsible for the death of his fellow countrymen because he cannot allow them to sabotage his beloved creation. He finally realizes his own madness, but it is too late: his dying words are "What have I done?"

In **Lawrence of Arabia** Lean gives us his most sublime vision, through both setting and the achievements of his hero, of the possibilities of life existing beyond the boundary separating the extraordinary from the ordinary. But it is also his most terrifying exploration of the danger inherent in daring to travel outside the common bounds of humanity. Lawrence crosses a desert not thought humanly possible to cross, conquers a city that is called impregnable, and saves the life of a man given up for dead. In the final, logical extension of man's quest to achieve that which is considered beyond his realm, Lawrence begins to believe he is a messiah. Lean takes Lawrence closer to God than any of his other characters, but he also brings him the closest to insanity. Lawrence finds that taking life is as glorious as saving it, and if he has the power to give life, than surely he must possess the right to take it. He finally defiles himself in an orgy of killing, and leaves the desert in a futile attempt to re-acclimate himself to English society, an attempt doomed to failure because in experiencing the extraordinary he has irrevocably severed his bonds with the ordinary.

The second major group of Lean's films are his love stories: **Brief Encounter, The Passionate Friends, Summertime**, and **Ryan's Daughter**. These films present the other side of the tragedy inherent in romantic aspiration. The adventure films hurl us into the lives of people who attain the extraordinary, but lose their basic humanity in the process. The love stories reverse the situation. The characters are all quite ordinary people. The struggle is in terms of their frustrated attempts to break loose from their mundane, day-to-day existence, and how they eventually attempt to adjust their aspirations and come to terms with reality. Thus, in **Brief Encounter**, Laura Jesson gives up the chance to achieve a transcendent passion she never thought possible, because of her feelings of obligation towards her family. In **The Passionate Friends** Mary Justin gives up the chance of "belonging totally and completely to someone" because such a complete commitment frightens her, so she opts out for the easy security of marrying a rich man she does not love. In **Summertime** Katherine Hepburn's



Top to bottom left:
In Which We Serve (1942)
Blithe Spirit (1945)
Brief Encounter (1945)
Great Expectations (1946)

Top to bottom right:
Oliver Twist (1948)
Sound Barrier (1952)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

character experiences her long-awaited "magical mystical miracle" through a romance with a married Venetian lothario, but the circumstances finally force her to let it pass, and she returns to the lonely, mundane reality of her midwestern schoolteacher existence. In **Ryan's Daughter**, Rosey Ryan's aspirations are frustrated by her confining provincial existence. She can transcend her plight only through an affair with a floridly romanticized English war hero. Not only does the flimsy basis of this avenue of escape fail her, but the conflict it generates with her Irish community leads to her expulsion from her home.

It is significant that these love stories, though fraught with tragic occurrences, end on decidedly more upbeat notes than the adventure films do. Laura Jesson may suffer at the thought of never seeing her lover again, but she returns to a kind, loving husband and a family she deeply cares for; and she takes with her an awakened awareness and understanding of herself and of life's possibilities that she never had before. Mary Justin returns to her rich husband with a fuller understanding and deeper respect for him. **Summertime**'s schoolteacher has learned that magical mystical miracles will not happen to those who sit passively waiting for them to occur, and her straightforward puritanical attitudes have gained an awareness of the complexities of life. Rosey Ryan has made the adjustment from fantasy to reality, from adolescence to adulthood, and in being thrown out of the town receives her first real chance to escape its provincial confines. Once Lean's visionary heroes have made their final break from the rest of humanity, there is no turning back. But for his heroines who remain tragically grounded in the ordinary, there remains the option of coming to terms with themselves within the confining limitations of their existence.

Of Lean's other films, **Madeleine** has much in common with the love stories, and serves as the most striking example of how Lean utilizes sex and sexual guilt as major forces in these films. It is always through the wildness, unpredictability and excitement of sex that his heroines attempt to break loose from their mundane existences. This is particularly true in **Summertime** and **Ryan's Daughter**, where the sexual act itself temporarily realizes for them their transcendent aspirations. And sexual guilt, coupled with the fear of public exposure and shame, is often a major force in keeping his heroines from making a complete break with the limited existence which they are unhappy with. Indeed, sexual shame is at the very center of **Madeleine**.

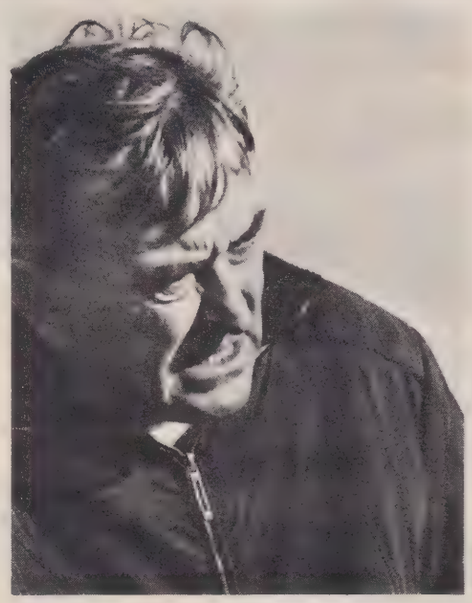
The film is laced with low-key, murky phallic symbolism. In one sequence, Lean conveys the contrasting feelings of shame and excitement that sexual passion arouses in

Q: What do you consider to be your best film?

LEAN: It's an awfully hard question because I think one always tends to think that the most recent film is the best. I think **Ryan's Daughter** has come off in relation to what we've tried to do. You know, I wished all my films had the bloom of age. **Lawrence of Arabia**, for example, got torn to bits by the critics and now on its reissue in London it's making more money than it did when it first came out. It has passed through the envy belt. It's now an old picture. Nowadays everybody's flocking to see it. When you make a new film, especially today, I think everybody's there with their knives out, waiting. And we really stuck our chin out because we've made, as it were, an old-fashioned picture. I've made it as smooth as I can. There are no jump cuts, the photography is as good as I could get it and there's no improvisation . . . it's all written in the script. So obviously we're in a difficult situation. There'll be a lot of cross-currents, which I can't forecast.

Ryan's Daughter is a very explicit, understandable film, and perhaps we've occasionally made a point only too well or too explicit. Critics, of course only give you the benefit of the doubt when you are obscure. Let me tell you a wonderful story that really happened to illustrate what I mean. If projectors are not synchronized, the academy leader, showing a countdown from ten to one, may appear over another scene. At a show in London, not all that long ago, this disaster happened, and the numbers were superimposed over a dramatic scene. The critics fell over themselves with enthusiasm over these numbers which really didn't mean anything, but made the whole thing seem so significant.

Q: A few years ago on American educational television Sam Spiegel said that he'd brought you into ***The Bridge on the River Kwai*** *very late in the game, that he had the script, heard you were in Hollywood without a project, and simply assigned you to the picture. Yet the film's crew is obviously yours: Jack Hildyard on camera, Malcolm Arnold as composer, and Peter Taylor as editor, all these people had worked with you in the past. Could you give us the genesis of your involvement with* ***Kwai****?*



LEAN: I came to New York for personal reasons. I was damned near broke, because you never get any profits out of film — you know that. It's a sort of fantasy. If you have an enormous film that just falls over itself at the box office, then you'll get something, but I hadn't had anything to date like that, and an agent came along to me and said there was a man called Sam Spiegel, who I remembered years ago in London before he was at all well known, and he's got a book. He gave me the book and I read it. I saw the agent a few days later and said, "Look, if the script (which he didn't have) is more or less faithful to the book, then I'll do it." Then I couldn't get the script. When I finally read it, I said, "If this is it I don't want to do it. I'll start again from scratch but otherwise I'm out." I mean the whole film when I read it started in an American submarine; the thing was being depth-charged. It really was not very good. So we started all over again, and, one writer, two writers, three writers, and including me, four writers worked on it and we finally did it.

Q: ***Ryan's Daughter*** *is an often depressing and doubtful film that culminates in a pessimistic vision of life which permeates much of your work to date. In* ***Great Expectations*** *Miss Haversham asks, "What have I done?" and in* ***Bridge on the River Kwai*** *Colonel Nicholson literally repeats the same question. In* ***Ryan's Daughter*** *everyone seems to be asking, "What have I done?" Everyone is trying to help each other and everyone is hurting each other without meaning to. It seems a very trapped situation.*

LEAN: We tried to portray a girl who had romantic dreams. Her romantic dream then came to her and we portrayed the love story between her and Chris Jones in a purposely over-romantic way, almost like an erotic dream . . . very, very much in her head. And we hoped that if we stopped the film in the middle of the love story and asked the audience what is going to happen to their love, they would say "it's burning far too bright to last." We certainly made it intentionally over-romantic so that the girl would have a frightening fall back to earth and realize that her heaven does not indeed exist.

Q: You no longer receive actual screenplay credit for your films, yet you are still a very active participant in the creation of your films' screenplays. How would you describe your contribution

Lean's films reveal a consistently tragic vision of the romantic sensibility attempting to reach beyond the restraints and constrictions of everyday life.

Madeleine by utilizing some daring cross-cutting between her and L'Angelier making love on a hilltop and a peasant couple dancing at a festival in the town below them. During this sequence Madeleine provocatively teases him by trying to get him to dance, and then by grabbing his cane and tossing it aside. The cane had previously been established as an undeniable phallic symbol, and the phallic import of the gesture is magnified by L'Angelier's curious anger at the deed. Like a naughty child, she runs away from him, and he follows after her. She falls down and looks up at him towering over her, seeing only his feet and legs. She projects an obvious, coquettish sense of pleasure at being in this position of subjugation. He looks at her sternly and with sexual anticipation. As he begins to move towards her, a woman's scream is heard on the soundtrack, and Lean cuts back to the dancing peasants. The scream, which at first seemed to be Madeleine's as she was about to be violated, turns out to be merely the lusty yell of an excited dancer. As the dancing continues Lean focuses on a particular couple who are becoming more and more aroused as the dancing goes on and quickens tempo. The woman's dress is brazenly low-cut and she flaunts her body with pleasure. Finally the two run out of the dance hall to be alone, and presumably, to satisfy their lust. The cross-cutting here does more than simply provide an acceptable-to-the-censor metaphor for Madeleine's lovemaking, although it does serve that purpose with a visual daring and frenzied editorial tempo that is quite notable for its era. But the parallel of Madeleine with a woman from a lower class than her, of whom her father and family (whose approval means a great deal to Madeleine) would certainly disapprove, conveys a lowering of her self-image through the sexual act. The cut on the scream further suggests the violent, dominance-oriented nature of the act.

The sexual paranoia that Laura Jesson experienced in **Brief Encounter**, her fear of shame through exposure, becomes reality for Madeleine during her trial for L'Angelier's

during this phase of the filmmaking process?

LEAN: I spend so much time on a film's script not because I consider myself a writer, but because I consider it my homework for directing the film. So, when we start the film, I know a great deal more about the characters than the actors who are portraying them do. Now, half of my job is to explain those characters to them if they don't get it off the written page. This frequently happens. And, people often ask me, "Do you have temperamental fights with actors?" No, I don't. Because most actors, in fact nearly all the good ones, are basically frightened rabbits. It's quite something to stand up and be photographed. Just think of a snapshot, how difficult it is to get a snapshot of your friends. Immediately, that tiny little camera somehow freezes them. Now add microphones, lights, a whole crew, plus dialogue, and it is a very frightening thing. I remember reading once an essay by Max Beerbohm, who tried to answer why actors, actresses, and opera singers take criticism so personally. He said that it is because they personally are being criticized. It is *their* face, *their* voice. While all of us can say, "Well, we wrote a bad script that time, or a bad book, or a bad piece of music," we can retire from it, but *they* are up there on the screen. I have an enormous respect for this fear, and a lot of my job is to give actors confidence. I was telling someone the other day, who was rather surprised, that I often have the camera turning on what they think is a rehearsal because they'll have an ease they won't have if they know that damn box is turning.

Q: You have always given a great deal of time and care to the music used in your films. Since you began your collaboration with composer Maurice Jarre however, you've come in for a lot of criticism for his somewhat overemphatic scores. There is a scene in ***Ryan's Daughter*** *in which the suicidal British officer and the village half-wit are walking together along a beach at sunset. There are explosives on the beach. Your staging of the scene brilliantly milks every bit of tension from the situation and sensitively brings out the thematic linkage between the two characters which is so important to the film. But Jarre's loud and obtrusive music telegraphs in very crude terms everything that you had gone to such great pains to establish visually.*

LEAN: I understand your objections to the music there. I'll tell you, this is what happens. You see, you get frightened. I personally didn't think that Chris Jones put over the fear of those explosives. I mean, it should be an exciting scene, you should be thinking that at any moment this bloody half-wit is going to blow the whole damn thing up. So, I asked Maurice — again, my fault — "put 'danger' into it." Now if you'd seen it without the music, I think the scene might not work. I know you pay a price by saying, "Well, it's corny, that music," but I'm not sure I wasn't right. I don't know . . . you know, it's awfully hit-and-miss. It's certainly my fault. It's lack of confidence, you know. You see a thing so many times, and you get frightened.

Q: If you look at films like ***You Only Live Twice*** *and* ***Battle of Britain*** *it is hard to believe that Freddy Young photographed them, at least when they are compared to the work he has done for you. [Young has photographed every Lean film since* ***Lawrence of Arabia****.] Have you noticed this difference, and if so, why do you think he's always better when working for you?*

LEAN: Yes, I have sometimes noticed this difference. I would think it's simply because I give him an intention. The whole thing in movies, whether it's sound, photography, or acting, is intention. An actor can be absolutely helpless if he doesn't know exactly what he's supposed to be doing. Sometimes we'll be having trouble, and I'll go off with an actor and ask what's wrong. Invariably the reply will be, "I don't know what I should be thinking when he's doing this or she's doing that," and I'll say "So and so, so and so, so and so," and I'll give him a whole list of thoughts, and he'll say, "Thank you very much", and suddenly come alive. It's the same thing with a cameraman. You know, you come in here and suppose you are Freddy and you have to photograph this. Now if I say, "Set up the camera over there and photograph it," Freddy will set up some lights and photograph it perfectly well. But supposing I say I would like us here on stage to be photographed in brilliant light and for the press that was in the audience earlier to be lit with ominous shadows, well, Freddy will latch on to the idea and give me something far beyond that. Now that's an awfully simple example, but I would say that it's intention that helps.

Q: You were in emphatic disagreement earlier today with the woman who felt that the kind of extensive training and apprenticeship which you had before becoming a director is no longer necessary for the neophyte filmmaker.

LEAN: She thought it was possible for someone without extensive training to make a first rate commercial film. I don't think it is. Obviously, there are some people who can do it . . . I mean, Orson Welles did it with **Citizen Kane** when he was only 24, but mind you, he had that wonderful cameraman Gregg Toland to help him on the technical side. I don't believe in having no training, I don't believe it's true for any of the arts, and I suppose we're inching towards an art.

murder. By daring to break with the conventional morality of the world she lives in, Madeleine is not only exposed, but also put up for exhibition for all to see and condemn. Her plight is a logical progression from Laura's imaginings and is itself taken one step further by the public beating and stoning of Rosey Ryan in **Ryan's Daughter**.

As Madeleine is taken to the courthouse, her coach is attacked by hundreds of angry onlookers, lunging at her with outraged righteousness and demanding her death. Her fears of exposure that she expressed earlier have now come true beyond her worst nightmares, and though the crowd is angered by the crime they believe she has committed, the reactions of her face suggest that the public shame of her affair upsets her as much as fear for her life.

As she prepares to enter the courtroom, the film's most stunning visual moment serves to emphasize this theme of sexual guilt. The entrance to the already-filled courtroom is a narrow wooden stairway. We hear the latch open, and a sudden shaft of light sharply and rudely exposes Madeleine's face, startling us into an awareness of the nakedness and vulnerability she feels, of being more or less put on exhibition for all to see. She looks up and we see, in those steep stairs, the great strain that she is being put through. As she climbs up, a subjective tracking shot from her P.O.V. gradually reveals a sea of faces staring at her from the gallery. The upward movement of the camera and the constantly increasing field of vision as it moves further up the stairs, revealing more and more staring faces, is a wonderful example of Lean's ability to utilize his set design for maximum cinematic effect, and the effect itself stunningly conveys Madeleine's feeling that she is being judged by everyone for her past. From the full frame of gallery faces, Lean cuts to a full frame of the judge's faces, and then to yet another full frame of faces, these staring down from the balcony. In all these shots the faces stare directly into the camera, and as a result we share Madeleine's uneasiness, and the awesome feeling that everyone in her field of vision, no matter which way she turns, is looking at her. This literalization of her exposed shame, and visual emphasis on her paranoia clearly puts the emotional center of the film not on the question of her innocence or guilt but instead on her experience of shame.

Of Lean's earliest films, **Blithe Spirit** may or may not stand up today as a light comedy; but even if it does, it seems unlikely that there is much to it that is relevant or meaningful concerning an analysis of Lean as an autonomous creative force. **This Happy Breed**, however, shares with **In Which We Serve** some germinal structural and thematic aspects that are quite relevant to a full understanding of Lean's work. Structurally, there are two elements worthy of note, and in fact both have already been observed by Gary Carey in his program notes for the Museum of Modern Art Lean Retrospective held in 1970. The first is that Coward's **Cavalcade**-like, modified epic structure of these films, in which intimate stories of a closely-knit group of characters' fates are indirectly but powerfully shaped by the history-shaking events going on around them, can be seen in the approach Lean and Robert Bolt took in their adaptation of **Doctor Zhivago**, and to an extent, in **Ryan's Daughter**.

The second structural element is the use of setting as a presence with as much dramatic and thematic force as any character in the film. **In Which We Serve** centers around the *H.M.S. Torren,* and **This Happy Breed** uses the family's house as its narrative anchor and as a thematic metaphor for England. Afterwards, Lean wasn't to use setting so much as an expedient narrative device, but rather as a purely cinematic manifestation of theme and atmosphere. The English moors seen for relatively brief periods during the opening moments of both **Great Expectations** and **Oliver Twist** remain the images that last the longest in one's mind after seeing the films. The use of the wild Irish coast as a playground for Rosey Ryan's romantic idylls, the emphasis on the Russian land to convey the soul of Zhivago's character, the magic atmosphere of Venice luring the schoolteacher out of her puritanism and into an affair, the stifling atmosphere of Scottish provincialism that closes in on

The adventure films hurl us into the lives of people who attain the extraordinary, but lose their basic humanity in the process. The love stories reverse the situation.

Madeleine Smith, the griminess of the railway station reflecting Laura Jesson's shame and fear of exposure, the virtual aerial ballets that comprise so much of **The Sound Barrier**, so perfectly capturing the emotional excitement that gives life to the theme of man stretching his grasp beyond what was previously thought possible . . . this tangible presence of a setting is seen throughout Lean's career.

But the foremost example occurs in Lean's multi-leveled use of the desert in **Lawrence of Arabia**. Its awesome, unearthly beauty exists always as a tangible presence and never as just a backdrop, scorching our perceptions until we enter into Lawrence's experiences in an impressionistic rendering that has been achieved in only a few films. This wild land is seen as the catalyst that created the legend and destroyed the man; its presence is felt throughout the entire film, used in some instances to complement, at other times to counterpoint, the struggles raging within Lawrence's tortured psyche. Alternatingly horrible and elegant, the changing of entire landscapes before our very eyes is finally mystical in its transient unreality. Lawrence's megalomania becomes immediately understandable through the eternal, religious implications of such a setting, yet Lean can also use this setting as a vast, arid reflection of his character's gradual moral descent.

The first two Coward films serve as a fitting thematic starting point for Lean's career. They emphasize the concept of a home, of stability, of existing within the security of a family unit — above all, of belonging. Early in his career Lean establishes these ties that constitute the center of most men's existence, as if to be setting the foundation for his explorations of the sublimity and terror involved in breaking away from such security.

In his later films he still utilizes this evocation of group unity and solidarity, but now he does so to counterpoint and give added force to the films' central concern of depicting characters who dare to strike out on their own. The family unit is first destroyed by Ridgefield as he sacrifices his son and son-in-law in the name of his quest, and then provides his salvation when he can no longer stand the intense loneliness that total commitment to the extraordinary demands. **The Bridge on the River Kwai**'s most glorious moments — the marching of the English P.O.W.s into the prison camp whistling the Colonel Bogey March, and Nicholson's victorious release from the hot box — are not only evocations of extraordinary courage, but also precise pictures of the importance of group solidarity. Nicholson verbalizes the need to belong to something throughout the film, and indeed Lean's continual juxtaposition of Nicholson's sense of belonging to his unit with Saito's alienation from his men implies that this is the source of Nicholson's strength and the reason for his final mastery over his captor.

In **Lawrence of Arabia**, Lean continually emphasizes Lawrence's alienation from his English society and military colleagues, and in fact the film can be seen as the story of a man who is desperately trying to discover who he is and where he belongs. Among the Arabs, Lawrence attempts to forge a new identity, and the film's happiest, most triumphant moments come when he is accepted by the Bedouins as one of their own. But this is before Lawrence's hunger for the extraordinary plunges him into the madness that permeates the movie's second half. Thus Lean uses an evocation of a foreign, exotic instance of group solidarity as a stepping stone in Lawrence's flight from the rest of humanity.

The emphasis on the danger inherent in breaking off from the solidarity of the group reaches its most complete narrative exploration in Rosey Ryan's clash with her community in **Ryan's Daughter**; but it is most precisely stated through editing in **The Bridge on the River Kwai**. Here the juxtaposition of a touching, human instance of group solidarity — the ensemble singing of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" as Nicholson is confined to the hot box — with the shooting of one of the few P.O.W.s who refuses to go along with the other prisoners' apathy towards escape, emphasizes this theme. The actual juxtaposition is one of undeniable clarity and force; the blast of the Japanese rifle shot that kills the escaping prisoner is virtually mingled on the soundtrack with the echoes of the other prisoners singing in united comradeship.

The paradox of simultaneously presenting the sublime possibilities of existence with the peculiar pathology involved in reaching for the sublime is given added resonance by Lean's presentation of his heroes. His fascination with their single-minded dedication forcefully shines through these films. Ridgfield, Nicholson, and Lawrence stand out as three of the most dynamic and charismatically compelling screen figures of the past 25 years. Despite the terrible things these characters may do, we are drawn to them, because Lean focuses the excitement of his films around them. Lean has often expressed his admiration for "professionalism," which he defines as "shutting up and doing it." This personal admiration for wholly committed men of action cuts through and at times overwhelms his realization of the madness inherent in their actions. This overpowering interest is shown in the way he adapted novelist Pierre Boulle's original portrait of Nicholson. In the novel Nicholson is seen as much more of a cut-and-dried case of madness than he is in the film. Boulle creates him as a satiric caricature of the British military mind. We are never encouraged to feel much sympathy for him. Lean is well aware of Nicholson's madness, but he throws us into the Colonel's triumphs, so subjectively involving us that by the film's conclusion our reactions to the bridge carnage are so mixed as to approach the schizophrenic.

Lean's fascination with characters who act from single-minded dedication is so great that it has on occasion worked to his disadvantage. The true Lean heroes of **Doctor Zhivago** (Tom Courtenay's revolutionary Strelnikov) and **Ryan's Daughter** (Barry Foster's Irish freedom fighter) are characters subordinate to the central concerns of the films. Yet Lean creates a dynamism and charismatic aura around them which gives their relatively few scenes a highly charged electricity that is never equalled in the scenes dealing with the films' central characters. The result is a misplacement of audience interest that throws both films into an imbalance from which they never completely recover.

Doctor Zhivago contains many of the adventure films' characteristics, and is centered around a story of love. It can't really be placed in either of the two categories, but its central concern is a corollary of both. That concern deals with the ultimate helplessness of man against not only the forces of nature and the impersonal, unstoppable movement of political power and history, but also when he innocently stands in the path of a Leanian hero's irresistible force. In concentrating on relatively passive people and keeping the kind of characters he is usually most concerned with as peripheral figures, Lean has made a movie that can be seen as a compassionate, cautionary reply to his adventure films. Of course, as mentioned, this strategy is not a very sound one as far as narrative construction is concerned, and as a result the film suffers from some very major problems.

Expressions of time, age, and transience permeate much of Lean's work. The very structure of his films often emphasize feelings of time irreparably lost. Lean jumps back and forth in time more often than any other director of his generation. **In Which We Serve**, **Oliver Twist**, **Madeleine**, and **Lawrence of Arabia** all shift back and forth through time to some degree. The most striking instances however, occur in **Brief Encounter**, **The Passionate Friends**, and **Doctor Zhivago**. Besides shifting more than once between past and present (the film even repeats one scene), **Brief Encounter** tells its story through the form of a woman sitting by her fireplace recollecting her recent past. The atmosphere of melancholy musing is augmented by the reverie-like Second Piano Concerto of Rachmaninoff. The station, with its commuters constantly coming and going, and its trains rushing through, emphasizes not only that time is running out for Laura and Alec, but also the larger implication of the passing of time that is felt in the film.

If **Brief Encounter**'s flash-back structure is fairly intricate, **The Passionate Friends**' comes close to being labyrinthian. Its structure is a considerable formal achievement, and employs flash-backs within other flash-backs with a clarity and facility that is astounding for a film first released over 25 years ago. Beyond its purely formal achievements however, this structure serves to convey the film's wistful quality of youth past with a physical immediacy that is deeply affecting. Lean's use of overlapping sound to bring us rudely back to the present adds greatly to this overall effect. A quiet sadness concerning the lost ideals, aspirations, and enthusiasms of youth gently permeates the entire film, which remains Lean's most complete expression of this theme of time.

Doctor Zhivago's story is told through a narrator, Yevgraf, Zhivago's half-brother, and also utilizes a flash-back structure. The film is notable for a startling, highly stylized narration-flash-back device that freely intermingles narration from the present with dialogue and visuals from the past. Near the middle of the film Yevgraf tells of visiting Zhivago's family and warning them to leave Moscow. We alternately see the action as straight-on narrative and as reminiscence via Yevgraf's voice-over. Then Lean begins to mix past and present tense. Yevgraf tells us in the present what he said, and Yuri replies to him in the past. Silent depictions of the family's reactions are intermingled with naturalistic sound recording, sometimes even within the same shot. It is certainly a daring stylization, risking as it does the audience's suspension of disbelief by temporarily disorienting them from their preconceived expectations of a film's storytelling procedures. It is particularly daring because Lean, of course, is not Godard or Brecht, and the last thing he wants to do is throw his medium up in his audience's face. The risk is made in an attempt to condense filmic time as tightly as possible. Theoretically, one's first reaction would be that the strategy is doomed to failure. Yet Lean's faith in a mass audience's assimilative capacities triumphs over detached academicism; remember, **Doctor Zhivago** is among the most popular films ever made.

Cast in the mold of the Leanian hero, Yevgraf has single-mindedly devoted his life to the cause of the revolution. He is a character who admits to having "killed better men than I," and whose only friendships and family contacts seem to have been his few meetings with Zhivago and Lara. Now that the revolution has succeeded, the object of his dedication no longer demands such self-sacrifice. The expression of a life spent and time lost, and the realization by a character who has achieved something seemingly beyond the capacity of human experience that he has left behind an important part of his humanity in the process, are revealed not only through Yevgraf's search for a "family" that consists entirely of the illegitimate child of a half-brother; but also through the flash-back technique itself which presents the action of the film in the form of a memory; as well as by the melancholy, elegiac voice of a man whose extraordinary experiences have left him tired and painfully aware of the need for the simple joys of everyday human companionship.

The girl Yevgraf thinks is the daughter of Zhivago and Lara emotionally tells him that she once wanted a mother desperately, but that it doesn't really matter anymore; it's too late. Thus in her character too the theme of time and youth irreparably lost is felt.

In Lean's other films, age and transience are more peripheral themes, but their consistency suggests an importance that a casual glance would not indicate. They are present in

In Which We Serve (the *Torren*'s replacement carrying on the life of the ship and the men who sailed her); **This Happy Breed** (the house representing both the endurance and transience of family values and unity); **Blithe Spirit** (comically, life after death); **Great Expectations** (Miss Haversham's attempt to stop time and perpetually relive her wedding day); and **The Bridge on the River Kwai** (Nicholson's speech at the bridge: while watching the sun set he speaks of the realization of waking up one morning and thinking that you are "closer to the end than to the beginning.").

There is a pessimism inherent in Lean's view of the romantic aspiration. The only Lean films after **Blithe Spirit** that have conventional "happy" endings are **Great Expectations, Oliver Twist**, and the comic **Hobson's Choice**. It is a striking discovery to find the consistency with which suicide plays a major role in Lean's films. Both Laura Jesson and Mary Justin attempt to throw themselves in front of an oncoming train; Ridgefield's incompetent aviator son's fatal first solo flight can be seen as a purposive self-destructive act. In **The Bridge on the River Kwai** Colonel Saito goes through the Japanese preparatory ritual of suicide, which is interrupted only by the destruction of the bridge. In the same film Nicholson sacrifices his life to protect his bridge, and Shears bolts into the open to face certain death in an attempt to blow it up. T.E. Lawrence's wild, fatal motorcycle ride is a result of a reckless, self-destructive drive witnessed throughout the film. Strelnikov shoots himself in the head in **Doctor Zhivago**; and Christopher Jones' broken English lieutenant destroys himself with explosives, in a sequence which quietly captures death's terrifying, seductive allure, in **Ryan's Daughter**. This self destructive urge in Lean's characters again emphasizes the harm man can do to himself in daring to reach beyond the ordinary.

Lean often expresses that striving in his characters by utilizing images of the heavens. In **Sound Barrier** there are not only the magnificent cloudscape aerial ballets, but also the film's final shot, which reveals the vast, shimmering, limitless expanse of the universe seen from Ridgefield's conservatory; in **Hobson's Choice** the theme is comically expressed by Hobson's drunken attempt literally to reach the moon; in **Bridge on the River Kwai** by Nicholson's simultaneous contemplation of the sunset and his life; in **Lawrence of Arabia** when Lawrence rides out into the moon's golden, shimmering reflection in the sea after achieving what no man had done before by crossing the Nehfud desert and capturing Aqaba; and in **Ryan's Daughter** during Rosey's lovemaking in the forest when the sun gleams through the trees, and when Rosey gazes up in longing at a circus of birds flying about in a magnificent blue sky. Of all his films however, this motif is most tellingly used in **River Kwai**. The film begins with a shot of a bird gliding gracefully through the sky. It ends with an identical shot, the bird still serenely and effortlessly flying, while below man's attempt to reach the extraordinary has ended in madness and tragedy.

Lean's style is dominated by editing, and his editing is dominated by striking contrasts. **Lawrence of Arabia** and **Doctor Zhivago** use the same strategy of cutting from a very tight close-up in one setting to an extreme long shot in another. The cut from Lawrence blowing out a match to the shot of a desert sunrise is often cited as a striking example of Lean's technique. However, Lean used the cut for its expressive and narrative values, and not simply as a bravura piece of filmmaking. Besides being an extremely economical and graceful storytelling device, the cut creates an ineffable linkage between Lawrence and the desert that a more commonplace transition would have failed to do. At his best, Lean always has a strong artistic purpose behind his spectacular editing effects. The most famous of these — the sudden appearance of the convict in the graveyard in **Great Expectations** — is indeed as scary as its reputation has it to be, but its fright is crucial in establishing not only the young Pip's state of mind, but also our identification with him. There is surely no more efficient way to gain audience identification than by having them subjectively share with the character the experience of getting frightened out of his wits. Seen within the context of the rest of the film, the cut between Rita Tushingham's child-like eyes and the vast panoramic shot of the Urals that follows in **Doctor Zhivago** serves more than just a striking decorative purpose; for it conveys through juxtaposition man's helplessness within life's vast, overwhelming canvas.

One of the most exciting paradoxes inherent in Lean's work is that for all of his magnificent editing effects, he is also one of the supreme masters of the single shot of long duration. In several of his films he has utilized the long take to crystallize, in a single, complex shot, the thematic concerns of the film as a whole. In **Oliver Twist**, Lean opens his story of an orphan waif alone in the world with the depiction of the orphan's birth during a stormy night. In this sequence one pathetic, silhouetted leaf falls from its branch. Its descent past jagged limbs, amidst a turbulent, awesome pit of a sky beautifully prefigures Oliver's plight. **In Which We Serve** stresses the bonds that tie Englishmen to their country and to each other. In the opening sequence of the film we see the *H.M.S. Torren* being constructed. In one long take we see a close-up of a red hot bolt in a furnace being taken out by a young worker. He carefully passes the molten bolt from his prongs to those of another worker, who does the same to another worker, who does the same, etc. The bolt finally reaches its destination, where it is drilled into form. Thus we see in this shot the interdependence of individuals on one another, their co-operation in working together towards a common goal, and finally, through the integrity inherent in the single shot, the concrete manifestation of man shaping the elements for his own purposes ... we have literally witnessed the unformed molten bolt being transformed into its finished state. The effect is that the ship truly seems to be the workers' creation.

The single most powerful shot of this kind however, and one that strikes the rare example of a director using vast technical resources and unlimited funds to express himself in a way possible only with such equipment, occurs as Zhivago is captured by partisans while on the road between Varykino and Yuriatin. As they begin to lead him away from the road they begin to descend a forested incline. But as they go down, the camera begins to travel upward. As it ascends it reveals the incredible black density of the forest and with it the dark spiritual labyrinth that Zhivago's life is to become. The camera continues upward until it surmounts the forest and overlooks a landscape of unutterable immensity. The forest seems to extend forever, surrounded by a deep blanket of snow and flanked by towering, snow-covered mountains. Thus the metaphor of entangled darkness into which Zhivago's soul will descend for years to come is created, left behind, and complemented in the same shot by a new matter of concern: the precise visualization of a human being dwarfed, engulfed, and finally obliterated from sight by the immensity of his surroundings. This shot seems to me the most intense summation of Lean's central concern in the film, and also expresses the ambivalence of that concern contrasted with Lean's attraction for the extraordinary and the exotic; an ambivalence which I feel gives a powerful tension to the tragic overtones of his view of existence.

This has been but a brief introduction to Lean's work. Many more specific instances could have been cited in relation to various aspects of his films, and many of the instances that were cited could have been dealt with in far greater detail. One example of a regrettable omission would be the lack of any mention of Lean's remarkably fluid, unfettered cutting back and forth in time and between fantasy and reality in **Oliver Twist**, **The Passionate Friends**, and **Madeleine**. The three films comprise a startling, impressive feat for that particular period in film history; a feat that deserves an essay devoted solely to an analysis of it.

As for Lean himself, this article must end on a singularly depressing note. His long-cherished project based on the life of Gandhi, a project which dates back to 1958, and which he enthusiastically told me in 1970 he was finally ready to film has been taken out of his hands and will now be directed by Richard Attenborough.

The Corporate Style of BBS
7 INTRICATE PIECES

The most consistent bond of these related, but still creatively distinct, movies is the isolation of their characters, the need to find a safer, better, more comfortable place . . .

Once was a time when the studio imprint on a Hollywood film was as unmistakable as the shadings on a Picasso, and few were the film enthusiasts who could not distinguish between an MGM romantic comedy and one that was made at Paramount, or tell a Warners gangster film from one spawned at RKO. The era of the independent producer and the distribution company has made such identification extremely difficult, and there are few companies who can accurately claim to have created a corporate style in these piece-it-together days of motion picture production.

Such a company is the Columbia-distributed BBS, a production organization responsible for seven films over the past half-decade, three of which were solid (not to say gigantic) critical and financial successes, the remaining four unequivocal losers at the box office, but each in its own way a complex, idiosyncratic experiment that is entirely within the unspoken BBS philosophy of allowing young filmmakers the opportunity to create freely in an atmosphere that encourages individuality. That to date this philosophy has been batting an estimable .428 at the critical/economic marketplace is a tribute to the validity of such an approach. That a recognizable identity in terms of visual, thematic and stylistic characteristics should emerge as well is an added attraction that inspires diving into the cross-currents to examine the specific contributors and their work, how they came together, and the factors that make up this rather fragmented whole.

American-International Pictures, and Roger Corman, to an extent comprise the spiritual fathers of BBS. It was **The Trip**, initially, that brought together Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson as actors, writers and second unit directors. **The Wild Angels**, the quintessential biker movie, featured Bruce Dern, a BBS perennial, as The Loser, and Peter Bogdanovich as uncredited screenwriter and assistant director. These low budget genre films provided the participants with valuable filmmaking experience, paving the way for their later achievements. Nicholson, perhaps the pivotal BBS figure, having contributed in some capacity to six of the company's seven films, served earlier as producer-actor-writer of Monte Hellman's exquisite pair of westerns, **The Shooting** (scripted by Carol Eastman) and **Ride in the Whirlwind**. These elliptical films are stylistic foreshadowings of the things to come at BBS, particularly with regard to Nicholson's work.

But the most direct lead-in to the formation of this unique organization came in the guise of a manufactured rock band. The much-maligned Monkees, for all their faults, had a lot of talented people in their corner. Their records were written and produced by the finest in the field (Goffin & King, Nilsson, John Stewart) and their television series, created by Mazursky and Tucker, was exuberant, if derivative. When their popularity soared, their tv producers, Bert Schneider and Bob Rafelson, were approached by the parent Columbia Pictures to do a theatrical feature with the band. So, with Rafelson directing and a screenplay by Jack Nicholson, **Head** came to be the first product of BBS. As far as the critics and public were concerned, it was not a very auspicious debut. The Monkees' bubble had already burst by the time of the movie's release, and there were not many people concerned about the vehicle that Rafelson and Nicholson had concocted. Truth be told, it was a bit of a hodge-podge, but the rapid cutting, the conglomeration of genres and the willingness of the Monkees so early in their career to do such a total blitz on their image made much of **Head** an intriguing trip. Sequences involving the group as dandruff in Victor Mature's hair, being beaten to a pulp by Sonny Liston and doing a riff on Annette Funicello are, if nothing else, examples of filmic imagination where simple exploitation would have satisfied all parties concerned.

When Roger Corman failed to pick up on Peter Fonda's idea to make the penultimate motorcycle saga of all time, Rafelson picked up the producer's ball and under the auspices of Columbia and BBS put together the second company film, **Easy Rider**, officially a Raybert effort. In some ways (many extra-cinematic), **Easy Rider** was a landmark film of the late '60s, and one that inspired a great deal of critical comment. Much of the film's ideology and language seems dated even at this short distance, but there are a number of aspects of Hopper's directorial debut that are significant signposts as to the development of this segment of the American cinema, a group of filmmakers determined to usher in a creative period comparable to the *nouvelle vague*. Visually, **Easy Rider** set a pattern that would be followed by the bulk of BBS's subsequent films. Director of photography Laszlo Kovacs' crisp evocation of our national landscape contributed to the overall conception of environment as subject, an idea that would become a corporate motif. If it had not been evident from **Head**, **Easy Rider** made it clear that this band of Hollywood outcasts was going to be involved in movies that were centrally American, dealing with essentially indigenous socio-cultural concerns. In that sense, **Head** was a movie that turned in on itself and questioned the validity of a cultural atmosphere that would allow the existence of such blatant media manipulation and commercial exploitation as the Monkees. Rafelson, Nicholson and the Monkees acknow-

By Mitchell S. Cohen

Films from BBS Productions
(left to right)

1968 **Head**
1969 **Easy Rider**
1970 **Five Easy Pieces**
1971 **Drive, He Said**
The Last Picture Show
A Safe Place
1972 **The King of Marvin Gardens**

. . . America's sudden insecurity, and the ways in which we cope with it, is a prime unifying factor in these five disparate directors.

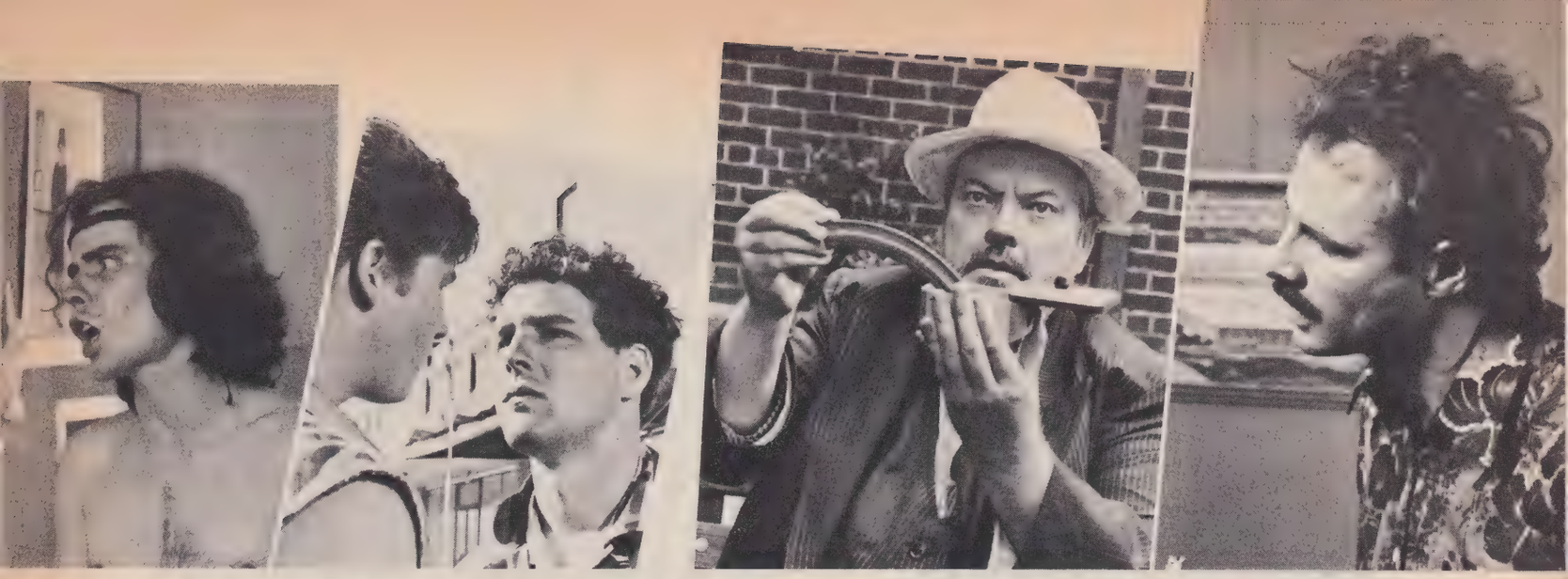
ledge their complicity in this outright consumerism, and so the resulting film is a bit ambiguous as to the real target of its outrage, especially in its inclusion of Vietnam footage. Strangely though, **Head** becomes a richer experience because of its creators' awareness of its disposability. All conclusions are tentative.

This is not, of course, the case with **Easy Rider**, a comparatively finger-pointing movie, rather indiscriminate in its choice of philosophical enemies. If **Head** was a boisterous essay on cultural mentality, **Easy Rider** takes the entire idea of America to task. The uncompromising youth paranoia message was considerably more accessible than the self-consciousness (and that term is not meant to be derogatory) of **Head** with the by-that-time unfashionable Monkees. **Easy Rider** made BBS solvent, and proved to be a farm team for other company directors, specifically Nicholson, whose performance was the film's single finest feature, and Henry Jaglom, a consultant on **Easy Rider** who would go on to direct **A Safe Place** and act in Nicholson's **Drive, He Said**. But aside from making these later films economically possible, in a number of more fundamental ways Hopper's odyssey formalized the company identity.

Running through the seven BBS features is the concept of disintegration. **Rider** and **The King of Marvin Gardens** are about the futility of the American Dream as the moral core of the country falls apart. **A Safe Place** and **Drive, He Said** portray main characters whose inability to cope leads to suicide and insanity. **Five Easy Pieces** and **The Last Picture Show** deal in part with the unraveling of the family unit and the crumbling of a form of civilization. Each has decay as its underlying metaphor, usually within the structure of some sort of game, journey or classical allusion, often a combination of the three. That this notion has **Easy Rider** as its prototype is unmistakable. A journey, aside from being a natural filmic subject, is filled with mythological import, and Hopper exploits this relationship to Homer as well as other sources by including long lyrical passages of Captain America and Billy on the road. The dope transaction, the lure of the Mardi Gras, the spectacle of the transplanted city children playing at being farmers and the mime troupe performing at their barren site are a few of the ways in which Hopper, Fonda and Terry Southern equate American life with games-playing. Add to the above the fact that George wears his old football helmet as protection when he teams up with Wyatt and Billy and the implications become quite explicit.

Rafelson's **The King of Marvin Gardens** shares this preoccupation with games (and role) playing. The title is, obviously, a reference to Monopoly, the great American game where the accumulation of wealth is the only objective. The Staebler brothers (Nicholson and Dern), one winter in Atlantic City, attempt to realize their dream of living on an island and turning it into a resort (with, Jason is careful to point out, no Pokereeno — a game which is a staple of the Boardwalk in Atlantic City). Jacob Brackman's incisive screenplay also includes a charade, acted out by the brothers and the two women, of a Miss America pageant, the flip (female) side of the American dream; beauty as opposed to wealth and power. Like Monopoly, Miss America is a competition that involves totally obliterating your opponents in the guise of good-natured sport.

Participant sport itself is used as a subject of **Drive, He Said** and **The Last Picture Show**, with the emphasis naturally placed on winning. Nicholson's film carefully sets up a balance between the two leads, a basketball player (Bloom — another literary reference) and a student revolutionary engaged in political, rather than athletic confrontation. The coach's monomaniacal obsession with victory on the court is equated with the establishment forces, such as the draft board, with which the activist must deal. Similarly, the football coach in Peter Bogdanovich's **Picture Show** covers up faults in one aspect of his humanity (specifically sexual) with his agressive masculinity, and the hopelessness of his team corresponds to the gradual decay of the town. Movies themselves can be likened to a game in that they simultaneously divert and propose a pattern for living, and Bogdanovich uses this comparison to point out the relative stolidness of the lives of Sonny and Duane. As the people in **Marvin Gardens** eventually can't come to grips with the reality of their situation and wind up crazy, dead, isolated in a radio studio or home watching old movies; as the ineffectuality of revolution leads to a berserk exhibition in a school laboratory; so the stifling environment of Anarene pales next to the grandeur of Hawks' **Red River**, sends Duane to reach for fulfillment in war and settles the rest of the town into itchy complacency. If Bogdanovich's solution to the ongoing game is, despite the death of Sam the Lion and a retarded boy, less apocalyptic than that of his contemporaries, it is simply true that his temperament and theory of movie making are texturally incompatible with the revisionists. He chose not to use the house cinematographer, Kovacs, and thus opted for a more naturalistic conception, hammered home by the use of black and white. Thematically, however, it would seem that his instincts are firmly new breed. Especially as he deals with the pressure of peer conformity and the impotence of small town life, there is a definite emotional link to the overall despair that characterizes the films of BBS. And, parenthetically, Sonny is a typically passive, acted-upon lead with similarities to Hector



Bloom, Bobby Dupea (**Five Easy Pieces**), and the Philip Proctor character in **A Safe Place**.

Further, Jacy's frequent excursions to Wichita Falls to seek liberation from Anarene's ordinariness are an incident of the type of escape-wishes common to many of the people that populate these seven movies. Bobby Dupea has fled his genteel, cultured roots for a world of bowling and easy pickups. What he finds is that both worlds are fraught with pitfalls, and that he is still rated on the basis of achievement. Bobby finds it just as ludicrous to reconcile himself to the kind of life lived by Stoney and Rayette as to remain amid the intellectual snobbery of his family. By refusing to be judged in accordance with tangible accomplishment (he lashes out when complimented on his piano playing) and fleeing at the prospect of remaining with Rayette, he is insisting on his rights as an individual and also proving himself a man who is by nature not a game player, although he is sporadically willing to show off his prowess for his own amusement. **Five Easy Pieces**, scripted by **The Shooting**'s Carol Eastman under a pseudonym and directed by Rafelson, is central to any understanding of the motivating force at BBS and its developing stylistics. **Easy Rider**, its forerunner, perhaps due to its extravagant shooting ratio, had a feeling of randomness in its scene selection, a sense that on the way to Mardi Gras there were a number of other moments that would have been equally illuminating. This notion persists throughout **Pieces**. Although we are quite deliberately placed at a dramatic turning point in the life of Bobby, Rafelson deliberately leaves ellipses in the narrative propulsion, so that scenes end abruptly and character situations (like those of Stoney and Catherine) are left unresolved. The journey film is by nature linearily episodic, but **Rider** and **Pieces** have taken this filmic tradition and infused a measure of inconclusiveness that places the chosen people and events on the axis of a larger continuum. **Easy Rider** is allowed to end in a conventional climactic manner, however, while its successor just leaves Bobby shivering in the front seat of a truck, on the road once more.

This fragmentary approach — the insufficient factual data that puts the viewer *in media res* and leaves room for speculation about former relationships, incidents, etc. — becomes a staple in the company's films; however, in no other film but **Five Easy Pieces** is the form manipulated quite as successfully. All the other films (excepting **Head**) utilize some crucial dramatic moment (the death of Billy, or Jason Staebler, the laboratory scene in **Drive, He Said**) to signal its conclusion. **Marvin Gardens** ends brilliantly with David's monologue and his grandfather's home movies, and the format of the film is reinforced by the randomness of the murder, but Sally's irrational act is still inside a firm filmic tradition of ending with a bang, a tradition which **Easy Rider** upheld, but which was seemingly abandoned by **Five Easy Pieces**. In this area of structure, the most difficult film in the cycle to deal with is Henry Jaglom's **A Safe Place**, a complex experiment in time and space.

The central figures in **A Safe Place** are Susan/Noah (Tuesday Weld), a troubled girl who lives in the past where, she believes, she was able to fly; a paternal magician (Orson Welles) obsessed with the desire to be able to make something, anything, disappear; and Susan/Noah's two lovers, one a former flame (Nicholson) who "murders" all his women once the affair is over, the other an adoring realist (Philip Proctor) who wants to free her from the past. Each of this odd assortment of characters has difficulty maintaining a grip on reality, whether it entails the solid matter of objects, the existence of memory, the ability to fly, or the capacity of instilling change in another human being. The extent to which each of the characters, but especially the female protagonist (the sole woman lead in the cycle) adapts or succumbs to his or her own particular blind spot is the central focus of the film, which aside from synthesizing a great many elements from other BBS films — rootlessness, environment as antagonist, magic and myth (Pandora's Box) as specific "game" metaphor — takes the segmented progressions of **Easy Rider**, **Five Easy Pieces** and **Drive, He Said**, strips away most indications of linearity and therefore sets up its own highly internal conception of time as related to physical reality. That is, we are never quite sure at what point in Susan/Noah's life we are. A cut may make a transition from one section of a specified field to, we think, another perspective of the same scene, but although the conversation is being logically continued, the clothes being worn are different. Verbal and visual motifs run through **A Safe Place**, with sentences ("I love you from Paris to Lisbon ... ") or images (Nicholson circling Susan/Noah on a rooftop) recurring in temporally nonsequential moments. This is, superficially, an extension of the fire flash-frame used by Hopper to forewarn us about Wyatt and Billy's fate, but where that could be construed as an instance of acid pre-awareness, the erratic nature of time in **A Safe Place** has no such sensible correlative. All moments for us and Susan/Noah exist simultaneously. This overload leads her to a ritualistic suicide, confirming, like the retreat to insanity in **Drive, He Said** and "The Ballad of Easy Rider" ("All he wanted was to be free, and that's the way it turned out to be"), that death or mental separation from the world are sometimes acceptable retreats.

In many ways, **A Safe Place** and **The Last Picture Show** are flip sides of the nostalgia coin. One is fearlessly obscure, the other structurally classical, both deal with the value of dwelling on the past, and both, as do all the BBS films, utilize the soundtrack to underline the visual theme. None of the cycle has what could be considered a traditional movie score. **Rider** uses pre-existent rock music that generally reinforces what we see, and the same is basically true of **Head**. **Pieces** inventively alternates between classical piano compositions and Tammy Wynette to musically describe the cultural schism in Bobby, and **Drive** has an electronic score composed by Beaver and Krause that is evocative but unobtrusive. **Gardens** dispenses

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with a score entirely, thus focusing our attention on natural noise, while **Safe Place** and **Picture Show** both select samples of period pop to orient, or disorient the viewer as to time and place. Hank Williams dominates Bogdanovich's film in a collection of songs calculated to vividly conjure up early '50s southern associations, and at that it works quite well. But there is not much going on beneath initial recognition and its placement in history. Jaglom, however, has hauntingly stitched together a group of songs like "As Time Goes By," "Someone To Watch Over Me" and "La Mer" that, as they keep us emotionally in Susan/Noah's mental limbo, also manage to evoke her somnambulist, dependent condition that exists out of the specific boundaries of the type supplied by Bogdanovich. The songs, like the editing technique, like Tuesday Weld's ethereal performance and the hazy sheen of the entire production, blends into its surroundings to provide the viewer with the same spacial/temporal uncertainty as the heroine, making **A Safe Place** accessible even in its most disjointed narrative moments.

When earlier it was noted that the BBS films are seriously fixated on the idea of America, this was not to suggest the lack of a considerable foreign influence on the individual directors. Certainly a description of **A Safe Place** immediately invokes Resnais as a clear stylistic predecessor. Enigmatic shots of a desolate beach in **Marvin Gardens** harken back to Antonioni, and some of the bleaker moments of **Five Easy Pieces** are distinctly Bergmanesque. One can also spot touches of Godard in **Easy Rider** (the circular pan at the seed-planting) and **Drive, He Said**. What is more directly the source of their Americanism is that the social temperament of the times and the BBS films share a common pulse point. All are products of the first Nixon Administration, and while that may be a tangential observation, there is nonetheless a sense throughout the seven movies, even in the consciously anachronistic **Picture Show**, that the creative minds are in contact with the spirit of the country; they feel the war without, with scarce exception, making mention of it. The American Condition is under close scrutiny. Death comes unexpectedly or with cruel calculation, claustrophobia is ever present and the need to "get out" is pervasive. What is blatant in **Easy Rider** becomes subtly expressed in **A Safe Place** and **The King of Marvin Gardens**: there is an erosion of ideals and an abandonment of morality, not sexual, but social in the broadest sense. The most consistent bond of these related, but still creatively distinct movies is the isolation of their characters, the need to find a safer, better, more comfortable place. America's sudden insecurity, and the ways in which we cope with it, is a prime unifying factor in these five disparate directors.

What all these intersections are meant to imply is not in any way a formulaic decision handed down from the company's upper echelon. Bert Schneider is not, after all, Harry Cohn, and each filmmaker was, so far as is known, granted complete autonomy over the finished product. So what BBS represents is not a rigid corporate stamp, but an idea about how movies should be made and how they should work. Each film sets up its own terms of involvement, whether it invites comparison with the golden age of Hollywood or abandons genre and the heroic hero to become a personal, even self-indulgent creation. There is throughout a unifying sensibility, regardless of the chosen vessel, that goes beyond the use of rotating actors and repeating thematic concepts. There is evidence here of a mature phase of American filmmaking born, in the disdainful words of one critic, of "**Easy Rider** groupies" whose use of film as a vehicle for self-expression does not entail the often shoddy mechanics of the experimental cinema. Real intelligence is at work in the films of Rafelson, Nicholson, Bogdanovich, Jaglom and Hopper (and one might add Monte Hellman, a fellow traveler in a different arena). An intelligence that is technical, emotional and intuitively aware of vast cinematic options and that should be quite encouraging to anyone concerned about the development of cinema in the United States and about where Wyatt and Billy were heading when that shotgun blew them away.

END

A Conversation with Costa-Gavras

It would be easier to make thrillers, to make westerns, to have a good life.

It is only fair to point out that when interviewer Berman arrived, this October, at the Holiday Inn in downtown Montreal for the conversation which follows, Costa-Gavras seemed to be suffering from partial "jet lag" as a result of having, one hour previous, gotten off a jet from Rome. Also, while the Greek-born filmmaker's proficiency in spoken English was respectable by most standards, it was often grammatically imprecise, and thus required that minor "corrections" be made in the written transcript for the sole sake of greater textual clarity. (There were, however, two perfectly bilingual individuals present during our conversation and available for consultation whenever it might be necessary. Costa-Gavras needed to call upon their services on three occasions for minor word translations.)

Q: Were your films, particularly **Z** *and* **State of Siege**, *basically designed as entertainments — loose recreations of a series of dramatic events for the screen that only incidentally convey political impact — or were you more concerned with these films as socio-political spring boards?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: I hope they can play a political role, all three of them, even **The Confession**. But it's a little bit difficult to know exactly what the political benefit or what the public reaction will be. The only way we have to see is through the newspapers or from people when they speak about it. Anyway, I can say that for **Z**, for example, the reaction was extremely positive. I am pretty sure of this because after seeing the movie everyone began to speak about Greece.

Q: What I'm asking is that when you sat down to outline **Z**, *or any of your films, did you consciously think "now I am going to make a film that people will react to politically," or did you say to yourself that "I will make a film that people will enjoy mostly as entertainment"?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: For **Z**, I did it that way. I did **Z** thinking that the public must go to see the movie as an entertainment, and perhaps something can happen, they can learn something. In that period it was very difficult to do a movie in another way because **Z** was written in '67 and shot in '68, but **The Confession** and **State of Siege** I did in another way. They are colder movies, more close to the evidence, close to the psychology of the characters. There is no big entertainment factor in **State of Siege**. I did it that way because I am changing and because I think the public is changing. It was absolutely impossible to make a movie like **State of Siege** four or five years ago.

Q: So, correct me if I'm wrong, but you're saying that you made **State of Siege** *primarily for non-entertainment purposes, in a sense, in order to enlighten people politically and to help them understand the situation in Latin America more accurately?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes, because if we wanted to make an entertainment we had all the possibilities, you know, with some of

By Bruce Berman

Bruce Berman is a Contributing Film Editor for Rock Magazine *currently doing graduate work in English at Montreal's Sir George Williams University.*

Now, perhaps a Watergate musical would be better because it's so funny.

the Tupamaros action which was, of course, very spectacular and very funny sometimes. It was even possible to make more of a thriller, a more suspenseful movie, but we decided to cut the suspense at the beginning and show Santore dead right away. In that way the public does not think in terms of suspense. They think more about who is the person and what is happening. The idea was to make a movie in which the public does not try to see if he will be killed, but — rather — who is this man who was killed?

Q: Were you ever in any way compelled to compromise the political dimension of any of your films in order to make them more accessible to a mass audience?

COSTA-GAVRAS: No, during the writing or shooting you do not think that way because the audience does not exist and is something very abstract. The only important thing in those periods is the movie. There is a general philosophy and that is to make a movie for a big audience and to write it in a certain kind of way, but that is only a general guideline. For example, in **State of Siege** there are two or three scenes necessary for political explanation, like the one between the Dean and the journalist at the University.

Q: Does the fact that in your recent films you employ somewhat fictionalized narratives in order to present stories that concern such vehemently realistic events bother you? There's always the danger that some viewers will perhaps take these movies as literal truths.

COSTA-GAVRAS: I think we have the same problem when you write a book or an article, You have to, how do you say that ... condense, to make a choice. It's absolutely impossible to write everything, so it is a problem of choice. What is on the screen, finally, is not part of the reality, it *is* the reality.

Q: I was just thinking of the characterizations of, say, the Tupamaros. You know, they're all so sort of young and good looking and sensitive ....

COSTA-GAVRAS: Because they are.

Q: You mean you are saying that all of the Tupamaros are young and good looking and compassionate like the actors in your movie?

COSTA-GAVRAS: I think all young people are good looking; even if they are ugly they are good looking. If you take a person fifty or sixty years old, the government Ministers say, they are not good looking not because of their function, but because of their age. I met something like twenty or thirty Tupamaros and they were all very good looking. The same goes in France with young people who are extreme left wing, because they are young, you see.

Q: But is it not possible for there to be a person, say a reactionary in established government, to be good looking, perhaps to even have long hair and look the way some young people do?

COSTA-GAVRAS: When I was in New York in April they gave me a dossier of all of the photographs of the people involved in the Watergate Affair. You know, if you made a movie with all of those people, ... they are so ugly, all of them, starting from the President and finishing with Mitchell or Mr. Haldeman or Mr. Erlichman. Mr. Haldeman's lawyer, I forget his name, he looks like Frankenstein. It's an age problem first and, the Tupamaros, for me, even if they are wrong, have better ideas than the others. They try to change society, to make a better society. Perhaps the way they take is not the way I think best, but I think they are sincere, all of them ... at least more than the others who say the same thing and do different things.

Q: What prompted you to use Yves Montand in **State of Siege** *in the role of an American counter-revolutionary agent? I read somewhere that you considered George C. Scott, Gene Hackman, and Brando before opting for Montand.*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes, first, I wanted to have someone who was very much a star, because the relationship between the public and a star is a sympathetic one and immediately positive, so the public wants to follow him. I also think that an advisor or a killer can have the kind of face Montand has and still appear very sympathetic or good looking. Another reason why I chose Montand is because I simply like to work with him. He is a friend and we have good relations. He understands what I want, and after each take all he has to do is to look at me and he knows if it is good or not.

I also thought that, and this is important, I thought that for this particular movie it was better to take an actor who was not directly involved with American politics, because for an American actor, Brando, George Scott, for example, it is not difficult for him to make the character more than he is. The Montand position is more, how you say ... "pudic," distant, perhaps modest.

Q: I see your point, but the reason I question your selection of Montand to play the part of Santore is because it just seems to me that in most people's eyes, well, at least in most North Americans' eyes, Montand is so much the stereotypical, "suave," Frenchman, and anything but an American, let alone a government agent. After all, there's **Let's Make Love, My Geisha, On a Clear Day You Can See Forever**, *and at least several other movies that have helped to fix him in this role. Despite whatever acting virtuosity he displayed in films like* **Z** *and* **La Guerre est Fini**, *isn't he a fairly type-cast actor? Because one so much expects this "suave," French lover's charm of his, it sort of lessens the impact of Santore as an American. Did you foresee a problem with this?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes. The casting was the biggest problem I had [laughs]. But for me Montand is a different actor in different films. It is a little bit like in Brecht's theatre, you know, the same actors playing different parts. Perhaps you are right, but generally people have told me there was no problem, you think of him as an American and you look at him as an American advisor.

Q: How do you feel about the American Film Institute accusation about **State of Siege** *"rationalizing an act of political assassination?"*

COSTA-GAVRAS: I think the situation arose because of George Stevens, the A.F.I. director. He said, and I think he was the only one to say it, that the film was a justification of political assassination. I think the movie is not the justification but is the explanation. It was made to show two parts: one, how we go to political assassination, and, two, who killed Mitrione [Santore's original]. For me, the State Department killed Mitrione, those who made the decision not to make the exchange.

Q: Have you received much strong positive or negative criticism either from the right or left concerning any of your films? I heard somewhere that the Black Panthers were at one time interested in **Z**.

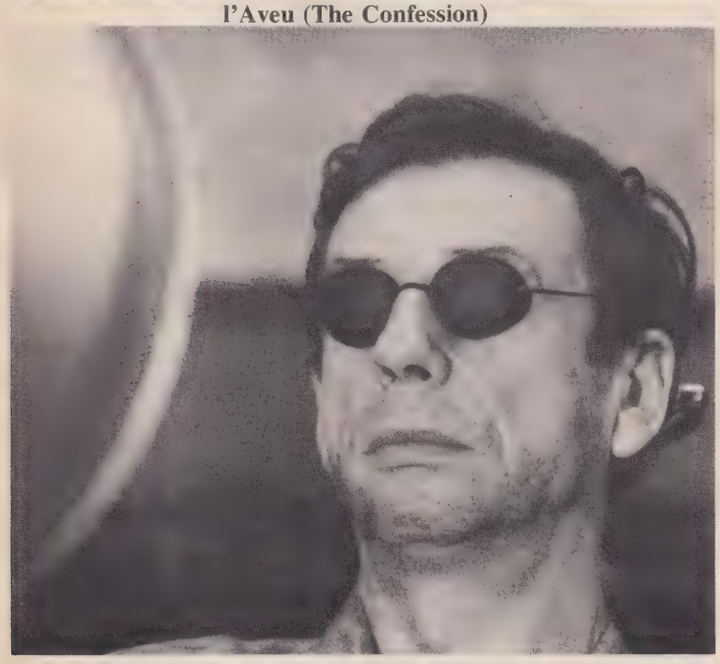
COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes, they stole a copy of the print from [distributor Dan] Rugoff in San Francisco. The first copy we presented was in San Francisco, and when someone arrived and said "I'm from Cinema Five to pick up the copy," the projectionist just gave it to him. Later, when I was speaking with the Black Panthers they told me they had the print.

Anyway, some newspapers in Indiana, where Mitrione was a police official, wrote that I was a communist, anti-American and all of those things. It was really sad because they didn't even see the movie. Also, sometimes when I'm at home in France I receive phone calls. The last one I got was about two months ago at about three o'clock in the morning. The caller said that "you must right now start to make political movies or we will stop you," or something

Constantin Costa-Gavras
Born, Athens, 1933
Arrived in France, 1952
Studies at the Sorbonne, and then IDHEC (l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques)
Successively assistant to René Clair, Yves Allegret, René Clément, and Jacques Demy

1964 **Compartiment Tueurs (Sleeping-Car Murders)**
1966 **Un Homme de trop**
1969 **Z**
1970 **l'Aveu (The Confession)**
1973 **Etât de Siege (State of Siege)**

l'Aveu (The Confession)



Etat de Siège (State of Siege)

like that. But I think this is more for glory than anything else, and there are also some people very moved by my work.

Q: Can you give me an idea of how you operate as a director? For example, once you have an idea for a film how do you proceed?

COSTA-GAVRAS: Each time it is different. When I decided to make **State of Siege** I went to South America and then I came back to Europe and then I returned to South America with my script-writer, Solinas. There were two problems here: make a choice of a theme, which is very difficult, and then, make the movie. The choice is much more difficult than making the movie.

We made a choice two months ago to make a movie about Big Business, as you call it. So we spent a month trying to go forward with that subject, but it was very very complicated. My God, I wrote several books, but for the moment we will let it go because it needs between six and eight months' work and I don't feel very anxious to spend so much time on that right now. And anyway, I have something else that I think can be good, but we are just in the thinking stage so I can't say very much.

Q: Can you tell me who funded **Z** *and* **State of Siege***?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Sixty percent of **Z** was French money, and forty percent was Algerian money. Not actually money, but the Algerian cinema is nationalized, and they supplied us with the people to work with and the extras, and they paid them. The rest was French money, with a small part of that, something like $80,000, coming from the cinema industry of France. **State of Siege** was half French money and half American money, with Rugoff's "Cinema Five" and Max Palevsky contributing. I don't know if you know Palevsky, but he is a millionaire who helped McGovern. Generally, at any rate, I think it is better to stay far from the majors.

Q: How expensive was **State of Siege** *as compared to, say,* **Z***?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Oh, there is no comparison. **State of Siege** was two or three times more expensive. The price for making a film, especially in France, has gone up three or four times over the last couple of years. For example, for **Z** we paid Montand $60,000 [laughs], and now it is five times that amount.

Q: Wow! What did he get for **Siege***?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: [Laughter] It's a secret! [Laugh] No, he got $200,000. For a commercial movie he asks for double, but I don't know if they give it to him.

Q: How does your salary arrangement work? Are you generally on a straight salary from the producer, a percentage of the net, or what?

COSTA-GAVRAS: [Laugh] It's a very particular situation, my situation, because first for **Z**, as we had very little money, I told the producer I would do the movie for nothing. I did **Z** for only $25,000 and a small percentage which was something like three percent of the French part. From all of **Z** I received about sixty or seventy thousand dollars. For **The Confession** I signed the contract before I made **Z** and I only received a very small salary and no percentage.

Q: What about **Siege***?*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Well, for this one I had a salary, but in a certain way I was co-producer because I became a very expensive director [laughs], and if I took all of that money I have to take it becomes very bad for the budget. So, I had a salary of something like $75,000, just like a salary, and then a percentage, fifty percent or something like that, only if the movie is a big success, but it is already a success.

Q: Seventy-five thousand dollars, plus fifty percent . . . that's a lot of money . . .

COSTA-GAVRAS: For three years [laughs].

Q: Perhaps it's not very much for you but it's certainly more than the Tupamaros take in annually.

COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes.

Q: But anyway, here you are in Montreal. You're staying in a comfortable suite in a hotel that is part of a U.S.-based multi-million dollar world chain. I know that while you were in New York City promoting **State of Siege** *you were lodged just off Fifth Avenue in the posh Hotel Pierre. Now, while the Tupamaros fight for the freedom of their political brothers in Latin America, while a repressive military junta still exists in the nation of your birth, and while blacks and other Third World people are at this very moment being*

brutally exploited, how do you rationalize this condoning of bourgeois values?

COSTA-GAVRAS: It's absolutely impossible to rationalize, but it is also necessary not to take a very sentimental position. We have two worlds. For example, when I am in New York I stay at a small hotel, The Algonquin, but when I am in New York and an American company is making the publicity for a film they insist, for their ego, that I stay at The Pierre. If not, they feel badly. But anyway, there are two different things to say: First, about the Tupamaros participation in the movie. When I first spoke with them and told them I wanted to make a movie, I asked them for some documents and they said o.k., if you make this movie with Franco Solinas we are in agreement. I told them that I was not making a movie for the Movement, and if they wanted one they should go and make it themselves. So they knew from the beginning that my movie would be something good for them and important for the Movement, etc., but was also a commercial affair, because the cinema is also business. On the other hand, I don't think it would change anything if I was in a small hotel, with a small room [laugh], without television [pause] ... If I ask the distributor to send me to a small hotel then they might think I'm an eccentric or I'm not trying to give a good image of myself. Everyone knows that a director who has one or two successes has money, and sometimes even too much money. For example, they asked me to make **The Godfather** ...

Q: They asked you to make **The Godfather***?!*

COSTA-GAVRAS: Yes, but I refused because the money is not generally important to me. I am not very involved with money. I think it's secondary, but, at the same time, necessary. But finally — because it is really very difficult to have a precise answer to your question — I think the most important thing is how I live each day in Paris. I have no Cadillac or Rolls Royce, and I don't have a big apartment. Sometimes when I spend money I feel badly because I know that others have nothing, but if you stop to give money to people there is never enough to give. The solution is not in a personal position regarding money. If there is a solution it is to change the system, to change the society, because it's necessary to have a solution for everybody; if something must change it must be the difference between the very rich and very poor. It is not possible to change this difference by taking a personal position. You cannot give your ten or 100,000 dollars each year, it's not enough to change the situation. It is necessary to find the solution in Society. It is difficult for me to say that I give money to this, or ... [ten second pause] ... I do not know if I am doing enough, and I don't think so. What I can say is that we live not poorly, but in a small apartment, with a small car, with everybody, without — you know — Picassos and those kinds of things that every producer and some big directors have ... I do not know ...

Q: Say your next film is a fantastic success and you come out of it with a couple of million for yourself, what might you do with that kind of financial power?

COSTA-GAVRAS: Some people say buy milk for the poor people, but, I don't know, there are things that can be done. First, in France, for example, there are so many young people who are trying to make movies. They are very serious but they cannot get the money to do them. Perhaps because I know some of them I feel this is the first thing to help. And there are other things to do too. In Latin America there are so many movements. I don't mean guerrilla movements, but just to ... to buy milk. But this is also a very Christian way to see it. I prefer that if I have five million dollars I give that money over so that ten or perhaps even twenty movies can be made in France, and in twenty movies perhaps there can eventually be three or four directors. It can be very important for France, for the cinema, and for what they are trying to do. I know that they need money, but I don't think that I will ever give money to an established political party in France.

Q: I recently heard somewhere that you were asked to, or were supposed to, make a film on the Watergate Affair.

COSTA-GAVRAS: They asked me in April to make a film on Watergate, but then, of course, things became really big, so I refused. It's really too early now, but in perhaps two or three years. The last time I was in the States I spent hours watching the hearings on television. I saw Erlichman, who was very strong but also very Nazi, and I saw Haldeman, Dean, Magruder, but I missed Mitchell. It was a big show. I spent four or five hours, from nine to one o'clock, watching. It would have been possible to make a movie before the affair flared up, but now perhaps a musical or something would be better because it's so funny.

The whole thing is finished, just like that. It is like in France two years ago when the national government came out with a dossier of scandals and gave the whole thing to a judge. For two months everyone spoke about this, but now it's finished, totally. No judgement, nothing. The same thing is happening with Watergate — only with Watergate it is a more important crisis because it's a world problem. These people, Nixon and Kissinger and Agnew, when they make a decision it is not only for the United States but for the entire world. It's necessary to see Watergate as something important in that way, but to write the history of this, it is also necessary to wait a little bit.

Also, it is just a feeling, but I think my next movie will be different. I don't want to make another dossier. I would like to do something different, but I will have to see later.

Q: Knowing what you know about the many world problems, you still say that you're thinking about not doing a "political" film next. How can you begin to consider this with a clear conscience, and involve yourself in something like say **The Godfather** *... well, actually* **The Godfather** *was not all that apolitical ...*

COSTA-GAVRAS: You know, **The Godfather** was very pro-Mafia in my opinion. After you see the movie you think "they kill, so what?, everybody kills." In the movie, they are never involved with drugs, which is the most vicious part of the movie because they are of course so very much involved in fact. Everybody accepts criminals in the United States. I mean, they are gangsters so they kill. Killing is not a very big problem after what happened in Vietnam.

The movie established two kinds of morals. For the people in the movie there is the gangster moral of killing, and the other bad moral of drugs. So because the family in the movie is not supposed to be involved with drugs then they are "good". In the last analysis, the people coming out of a film like **The Godfather** have a good opinion of the Mafia.

Q: But a metaphor has been created by some critics that depicts the Mafia in **The Godfather** *as being a parallel to the corporate structure in America with a similar familial-based heirarchy, ruthless methods of motivation and colonization, and a highly "perverted" sense of morality and justice. Some journalists even wrote that this is one of the reasons why Brando was involved with* **The Godfather**, *which can easily be seen as a "political" film.*

COSTA-GAVRAS: As I can say in French: "Le deuxième lecture," the second reading, the second level. We can speak of this or read it in the newspapers, but I don't think what you speak of can be seen by the general public. Morally, I think, young people's involvement in drugs is the biggest problem we face.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add concerning you, your films, or anything?

COSTA-GAVRAS: I've spoken so much about myself [laughs]. It's too much. The only political situation today is what is happening in Latin America, and what is happening in, especially, Chile with the help of Mr. Nixon. This is very scary because there is nothing that can be done. [Pause. Then, very slowly and emotionally ...] Make a movie, so what? People say you can make another film now ... it's a joke.

Q: If it's so fruitless, then why bother to make a film that attempts to expose the U.S., or the situation in Greece, or whatever?

COSTA-GAVRAS: I really don't know. It would be easier to make thrillers, to make westerns, to have a good life. If you interviewed Sergio Leone in this hotel suite you would not ask Mr. Leone why he is in this hotel because it is normal to see him in a hotel like this or The Pierre.

I do not know, but something pushes me. After **State of Siege** I told myself that the next one is going to be a thriller, just girls and action. But, after lots of thinking and discussions, I can't. I tried — they send me thrillers — but I just can't.

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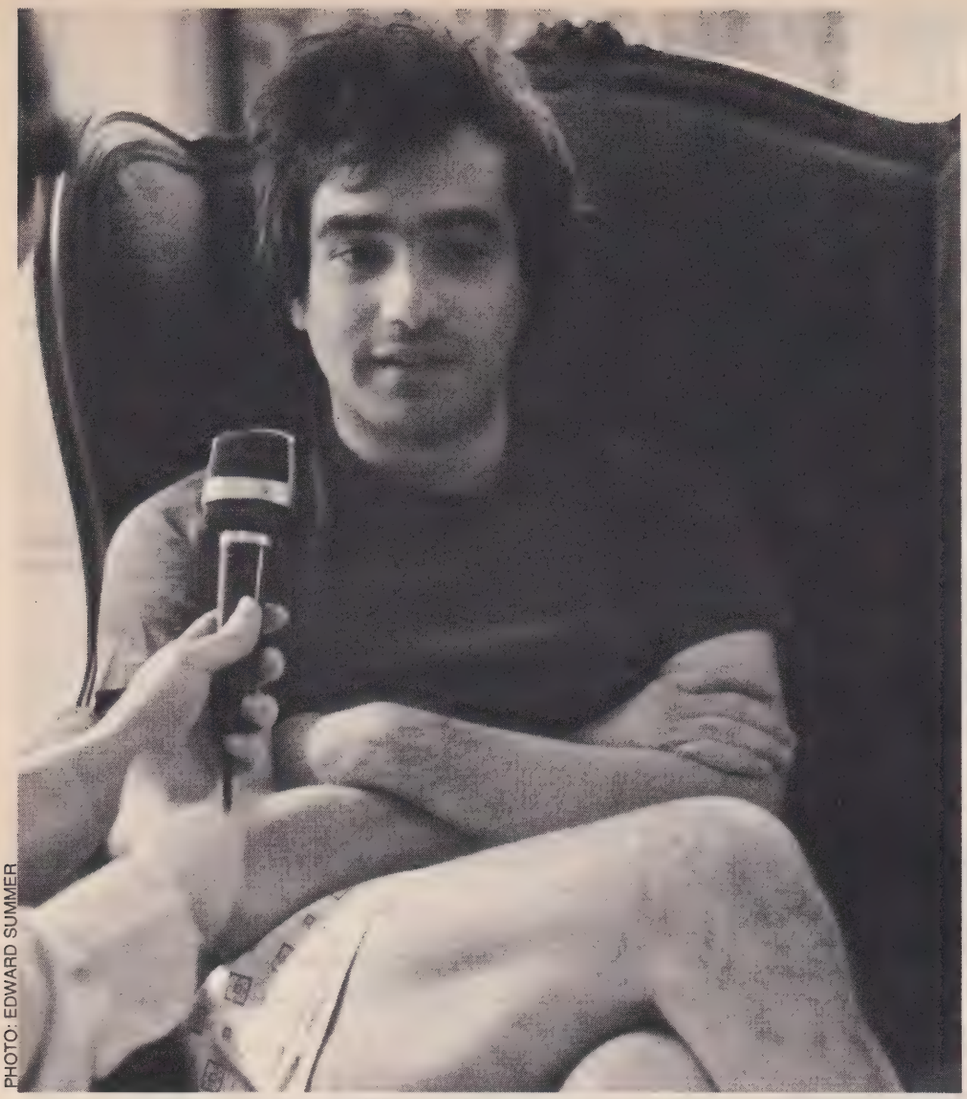


PHOTO: EDWARD SUMMER

MEAN STREETS

A Warner Bros. release of a Taplin-Perry-Scorsese Production. Director: Martin Scorsese. Executive Producer: E. Lee Perry. Producer: Jonathan T. Taplin. Screenplay: Martin Scorsese and Mardik Martin. Photography: Kent Wakeford. Editor: Sid Levin. Sound: Don Johnson. Cast: Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, David Proval, Amy Robinson, Richard Romanus, Cesare Danova. Technicolor. 110 mins.

Martin Scorsese grew up in lower Manhattan's Little Italy, where he and his friends led a life quite similar to the heroes of his latest film, **Mean Streets**. For Scorsese and his pals, the day to day cycle of living was broken up only by the unexpected arrival of "outsiders": Jews, 'Coloreds', hippies, basically anyone from the other side of the Family dividing line. A child of the Fifties, Marty found diversions aplenty in the local movie houses, where for fourteen cents one could relive the myriad adventures of Errol Flynn, Count Dracula and Roy Rogers in Technicolor and Cinemascope. Unlike his gang, however, Marty was obliged to refrain from physical activity because of an asthmatic condition, and his resulting need for an outlet increased his appetite for movies. When his friends were out playing ball, Marty would be inside, soaking up an unending cavalcade of films on the tv screen, from **Open City** and **Paisan** to unending reviewings on "Million Dollar Movie" of **Citizen Kane** and **Tales of Hoffmann**. When he was unable to watch films, he drew comic strips which he pulled through cardboard holders to make primitive movies.

Never a very promising student, Marty flunked out of preparatory seminary and went to a Catholic high school where, because of poor grades, he was further obliged to give up his summers to special sessions at Rhodes Academy. This was the summer of 1958, the same year the New Wave hit New York.

SCORSESE: Rhodes was my first experience outside the Italian Community. I mean there were *Jews* there and everything. And what's more, I found *Cue Magazine*. I used to pick it up and go to see *everything* at the Thalia. [Manhattan's leading revival house]. *Everything*. **The Stone Flower** in Sovcolor, **The Grasshopper**, "based on a play by Anton Chekov". For the two years before I went to N.Y.U. all I did was go to the Thalia. The first time I saw **Nevsky**, I walked in right in the middle.

DELSON: Sacrilege!

SCORSESE: What did we know? All we'd ever been to were neighborhood movies. I took some of my friends with me from time to time. "What's playing?" "John Wayne and **Alexander Nevsky**." "Fine, let's go." So we'd go and sit through the films to where we'd come in. No one told us. No one guided us.

DELSON: You stumbled onto the renaissance of Film.

SCORSESE: Yeah, exactly. The revival houses opened, and then The Paris Theatre opened with **Le Beau Serge**, Claude Chabrol's first film.

DELSON: The flowering of The New Wave. Were you making films at this time too?

SCORSESE: Yeah, in our last couple of years of high school I shot some 8mm films. The actors I used were guys from the streets, many of whom are in **Mean Streets**. They weren't actors, they were just neighborhood guys, like the ones **Mean Streets** is about.

Mean Streets was an unqualified success at the 11th New York Film Festival. Much as **The Last Picture Show** and **Five Easy Pieces** made overnight successes of Peter Bogdanovich and Bob Rafelson, Scorsese's film has already put him on the list of most thoughtful critics as One of the Ones To Watch. **Mean Streets** is Scorsese's fifth feature, but his first real boxoffice attraction. With it he has brought a new brooding star into being, Harvey Keitel, an actor who is much more than just Marty's hero. He has been a close friend for some time, and as Charlie in **Mean Streets**, he is acting out the thoughts, dreams and obsessions of his director.

Mean Streets is actually the second film in Scorsese's autobiographical series. The first, **Who's That Knocking at My Door**, traced the youthful rebellion of Scorsese / Keitel against Church, family and life in general. As a film it was a marginal success, but as a prelude to the second feature we see now, it laid the groundwork for an understanding of the motivations of our hero. Just as Scorsese has found it nearly impossible to escape the fate, destiny, or what have you of his upbringing, Charlie, the central character, finds it increasingly difficult to find a pattern his life should follow that will at once allow him the freedom to live as he pleases, with the friends he chooses to have, and at the same time please his uncle, the gangster/ restaurateur.

SCORSESE: I'm striving for an approach to filmmaking where things are simple and direct. Where I can tell a story and it doesn't have to be the longest, most complex or most traditional story in the world. **The Godfather** is a classic ethnic storytelling film, but I'm going in the opposite direction.

DELSON: Yet you have all the pacing, tempo and mood of a traditional Hollywood film. There's no story, yet there's the barest line of a story, enough to hold the film together.

SCORSESE: When we tried to get the film off the ground in Hollywood, the studio critiques were that it had a very bare story line and it was filled with digressions. They didn't understand that the digressions are what the film's about. That's the way life is down there, it's digression. It's never dealing with the realities of life . . . nothing ever really happens, but when things do happen they happen like they do in the film.

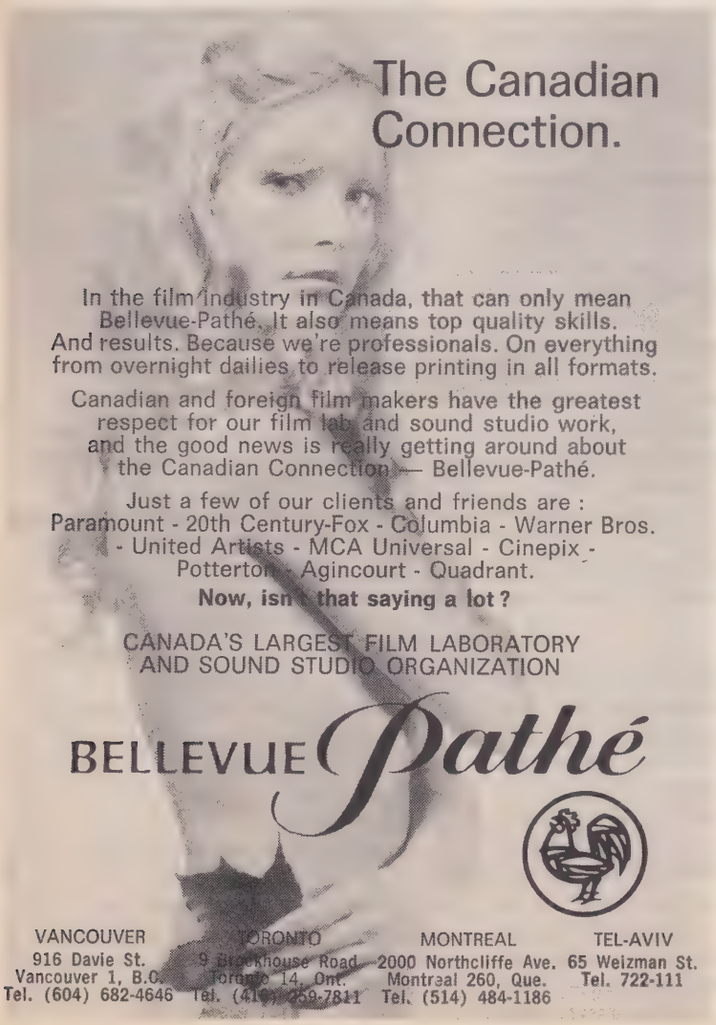
DELSON: How does Charlie manage to survive through all this? Is he less neurotic than he was five years ago in ***Who's That Knocking at My Door****?*

SCORSESE: I think he's even more neurotic and crazy in this one because it's gone much deeper. The more he says to everyone, "Oh, I can take care of this, don't worry about it, I can take care of it . . ." the more he's taking everything on his shoulders out of guilt and pride. It's the whole Catholic thing. The idea is never to have pride, but it's Catch-22. The moment you realize you don't have pride, you become very proud that you don't have pride.

The figures that populate the dark world of **Mean Streets**, most of which is shot at night or in dark bars and tenements, are monuments to the inability of the older generation to let go of their young. Charlie is a runner for his Uncle, the "alleged" gangster, Giovanni, played by Scorsese's real-life Godfather, Cesare Danova. Charlie wants to *be something* in the world, so he tries his best to avoid the characters he hangs around with, bad company that any self-respecting "businessman" wouldn't be caught dead with or near. As things turn out, his uncle is right, but that is merely another of the multi levels of **Mean Streets** that space limitations prevent further delving into. Charlie's friends and acquaintances are straight out of the pages of Valachi's journal: Johnny Boy (Robert de Niro) is a relic of the days when everyone had a nutsy friend to hang around with. Unfortunately, he borrows too much and from the wrong people, then spends the repayment money buying drinks while waiting for the collector to arrive. The doomed individualist /anarchist, Johnny Boy is Charlie's only link to the outside world, where Jews, hippies and humanity abide. His closest female companion is Teresa, Johnny Boy's cousin and, naturally, an epileptic, wholly unacceptable to Uncle Giovanni. The gang that Charlie and Johnny hang around with — going to the movies, naturally enough, to see **The Searchers** (one of Scorsese's favorites) and **The Tomb of Ligea** — are made up of neighborhood guys who have grown up together, but still spend their time in one guy's bar, drinking, kicking ass, and generally pissing their lives away in the dirty toilet in the back. It is no coincidence that *One* of the gang will eventually try to kill another member. The law of the jungle is bound to prevail where progress can't make a semblance of a bridgehead.

Scorsese's direction is so precise, his scripting so real, that one forgets the screen and lives with Charlie and company for two hours, savoring the aroma of fresh bread, oozing into the richness of the magnificently overdecorated sets, and marveling at the uniqueness of a cast of actors who appear to have lived together all their lives. Kent Wakeford's color photography, abetted no doubt by Scorsese's compositions, are very reminiscent of the best of Fellini's early works, with the slightest touch of Visconti's reds and Howard Hawks' interior lighting. As a breakthrough film, much in the tradition of Bogdanovich, Rafelson, and, more recently John Milius in **Dillinger, Mean Streets** is a sign of much more and much better work from a brilliant young director. *James Delson*

James Delson, a partner in Cinema Commentary Associates, divides his time between running his film research archive, writing free-lance for magazines, doing a weekly radio program on film, and the other aspects of the mythic cinematic arts. He is currently writing his first screenplay, Oasis.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WHY NOT TAKE ONE?

Columns

Overlooked and Underrated

Private Parts. Dir. Paul Bartel. Underrated and under-released (by MGM), **Private Parts** is a sleazy gem of a horror film. It follows the adventures of a runaway girl's flight to her aunt's hotel, a rundown fleabag of degenerates, druggies, sex maniacs, alcohol-heads, an aberrant man-of-the-Cloth, and at least one murdering psychopath. With all the insane fervor of a Paul Morrissey, underground director/producer Paul Bartel obviously delights in visually exploring this collection of human debris left stranded in L.A. as the hippie movement slouched off to Jesus and/or drugs. Half of this, Bartel's first commercial film, plays as a sometimes outrageously funny parody of horror films and their mechanical trappings. Yet the other half is quite serious as Bartel creates an extraordinarily deep feeling of menace, of fear, of alien invasion in this strange hotel and its stranger inhabitants. Thus, the film manages to have it both ways, and the constant wavering between these two poles builds in the viewer a paranoia of the meanest sort. Bartel is less skilful with his awkward depiction of graphic physical violence, but he excels in the more difficult realm of psychological violence and tension-ridden atmospherics.

David Bartholomew

The Apprentice. Dir. Larry Kent. This Canadian feature (first released in Quebec as **Fleur bleue**) can be found on the lower half of double bills featuring such delicacies as **Wild Honey** and the like. Kent's taste in matters of sex and violence remains just as low as it was at the time of **High** (1967), but his performers (Stephen Fiset and Céline Bernier) are more engaging this time and the photography of Jean-Claude Labrecque thoroughly professional. Especially noteworthy is the downbeat quality to the politics in the film which makes the hero's protestations much more intelligible to English audiences. *Howard Curle*

Hickey and Boggs. Dir. Robert Culp. In this, Culp's feature-film directorial debut, two seedy private-eyes (Culp and Bill Cosby) spend 111 minutes stumbling through the underworld as somebody's patsies. The plot is never all that clear, but the film more than makes up for that with two fine characterizations by the leads, some great photography, and an awful lot of action. The obverse side of the detectiving scene from C&C's "I Spy" series, never has the investigating line seemed less appealing (the two heros wear the same, slightly-baggy, very shiny, suits throughout the film; they never seem to get a decent shave or meal — one fine shot follows a half-eaten hot-dog up and down a telephone book as Boggs searches for a number — and their sex lives are just as chaotic and unsatisfactory as their business lives). Made on a very tight budget, the film should serve as a text on how to make an action-filled feature for less than a million smackers. *E. Anderson*

The Body. Dir. Roy Battersby. To describe this as a documentary film on the human body is like passing off **Battleship Potemkin** as a historical drama. In fact, one comes away from the film with a sense of wonder that parallels the impact of **2001** and pales that of **Fantastic Voyage** into insignificance. The usual child-birth scenes, of course, but also X-ray motion-picture footage of a man swallowing, slow-motion photography of tumblers and athletes, and a lot of truly incredible *internal* shots of the body at work (after working our way down the gullet and into the stomach, we watch urine flowing into the bladder and then "track" with the urine out of the bladder and down through the penis — honest!). The film is marred by the occasional attempt at social relevance (pollution, automation, etc.), but is saved by the British sense of humour and a blessed paucity of narration. Too bad that all the nudity has made it impossible (in North America anyway) for the film to be seen by the people most open to learn from, and wonder at, it — children.

E. Anderson

These three were left over from our last issue's listing of things worth catching on the tube.

The Ex-Mrs. Bradford. Dir. Stephen Roberts. This comedy-mystery starring William Powell seems to have been made to cash in on The Thin Man series, but it co-stars Jean Arthur who I'll take over Myrna Loy any day. It was made for RKO in 1936 and seems to use roofed sets and deep-focus! But leave that to Pauline Kael and enjoy the fun.

Joe Medjuck

That Cold Day in the Park. Dir. Robert Altman. Now that Altman's famous, perhaps it's time to take another look at this 1969 made-in-Vancouver thriller that came out just before **M*A*S*H.** The familiar Altman trademarks are all there: an elliptical narrative, overlapping dialogue, half-heard conversations. In fact, the film is quite similar to **Images**, with Sandy Dennis playing a crazy lady in this one. The film's about 15 minutes too long, but it's subtly guided by Altman towards a really nice, really nasty ending. The photography was handled by another then-unknown: Lazslo Kovaks. *Pierre Greenfield*

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They Might Be Giants. Dir. Anthony Harvey. Forget all the propaganda that the mirthless, spiritually constipated "realists" have been telling you is the one and only truth, and you'll find this film an entertaining excursion into off-beat metaphysics. In this film, Sherlock Holmes still stalks the arch-fiend Moriarty through the streets of New York. The Scarlet Pimpernel is as alive and elusive as ever, working in the basement of the public library. In an "it's all in your mind" trip which Sherlock (George C. Scott) lays on his compatriots (including the elusive Pimpernel and Rudolph Valentino), he says, "The earth is still shining beneath the soot."

Even if you're not metaphysically inclined, you should enjoy watching the so-called loonies of our society win at least one battle against the establishment vampires. *J. A. Thompson*

Letter from Hollywood

Hollywood, like the rest of the country, is in a state of reaction. The martial arts and cop corruption pictures dominate release schedules. The in-crowd has cut off its long hair, and decadence is embraced as an aesthetic. Memories of the high '60s are repressed as naive. The past, up through **American Graffiti**'s 1962, is an obsession, but strictly for laughs. There is a lot of catching up to do because everything was happening too fast for too long.

The Cosmics wonder if maybe, finally, this is the last down before the Great Up. Those who caught intimations of immortality in the late '60s are busy internalizing, learning the practice of love to complete the theory of love. They know their time will come; they watch the signs, store their energy, await the signal for release.

Hollywood, the great barometer of the nation, is sending the liberals back to learn their craft. The boys with good intentions had very short careers. The studios don't even want to release their last pictures. It's embarrassing to see those guys smoking grass and treating Indians as equals in **Kid Blue**.

They were the real lost generation, feeling what was wrong, but not knowing what was right with sufficient strength to produce a screenplay with the rhythms of universal truth — and you've got to know some of that stuff to hold an audience's interest or else you're just bluffing. As filmmakers, they had failed to internalize a heritage of form, thus their formlessness was a mockery of freedom, lacking even the energy of anarchy to promise a new definition of the medium — with only the willingness to let the old definitions fade away. John Ford is dead, and with him the American classicism.

Entertainment, like the great period of mindless entertainment in the 1950s, is the new commodity. Producing solid entertainment is not easy; it requires a

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New from New Cinema

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A film by Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin with Jane Fonda and Yves Montand. "One of the ten best films of the year." — Penelope Gilliatt, The New Yorker. "An avalanche of brilliant sequences and images." — Paul Zimmerman, Newsweek. "**Love Story**, but a little different ... there is a certain amount of avant garde bullshit." — Jean-Pierre Gorin, Take One.
16mm colour, 95 min., France 1972.
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These companion pieces to "Reefer Madness" could have been just funny, nostalgia films, but in the light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on pornography, and the stricter drug laws in New York State, we in Canada must expect our own backlash to follow — could these films represent the future as well as the past?

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A 16 mm Booker's Guide to Sources of Films Mentioned in this Issue.

Alexander Nevsky. Can:AST. US:MAB.
American Graffiti. UNI*.
The Apprentice. PHO.
Battle of Britain. UA.
Le Beau Serge. Can:FF.
The Beguiled. UNI.
Breaking the Sound Barrier. US:MAB.
The Bridge on the River Kwai. Can:VC. US:CMH & MAB.
Brief Encounter. US:WR & JAN.
The Body. Can:MGM. US:FI*.
Citizen Kane. Can:AST. US:MAB, FI & JAN.
The Confession. Can:PAR. US:GEN.
Coogan's Bluff. UNI.
Dillinger. AIP.
Dirty Harry. Can:WB. US:FI.
Dr. Zhivago. Can:MGM. US:FI.
Drive, He Said. Can:VC. US:RBC.
Easy Rider. Can:VC. US:RBC.
Enter the Dragon. Can:WB. US:FI*.
The Ex-Mrs. Bradford. Can:AST.
Fists of Fury. NG.
Five Easy Pieces. Can:VC. US:RBC.
The Godfather. Can:PAR*. US:FI*.
The Grasshopper. Can:AST. US:MAB.
Great Expectations. US:WR.
Hara Kiri. Can:FAR.
Head. Can:VC. US:RBC.
Hicky & Boggs. UA.
Hotel Imperial. US:MMA.
Invasion of the Body Snatchers. IVY & HCW.
In Which We Serve. WR.
Kid Blue. FI*.
The King of Marvin Gardens. Can:VC. US:RBC.
The Last Picture Show. Can:VC. US:RBC.
Last Tango in Paris. UA.
Lawrence of Arabia. Can:VC. US:COL.
Madeleine. JAN.
Madigan. UNI.
Mean Streets. Can:WB*.
Metropolis. Can:CFI & TSL. US:MAB & RAD.
Nana. Can:BEL. US:SGS.
La Nuit Americaine (Day for Night). Can:WB*. US:FI*.
Oliver Twist. JAN.
Open City. US:CMH.
Paisan. Can:LAP. US:NYF.
Pandora's Box. JAN.
Paper Chase. Can:BEL*. US:FI*.
Paper Moon. Can:PAR*. US:FI*.
The Passion of Joan of Arc. Que:LAP. Can:CFI. US:MAB.
Playtime. Can:FAR. US:CON.
Private Parts. Can:MGM. US:FI*.
Quick Billy. CAN.
La Règle du Jeu. Can:VC. US:JAN.
Ride in the Whirlwind. Can:MMP. US:WR.
Ryan's Daughter. Can:MGM. US:FI.
A Safe Place. Can:VC. US:RBC.
The Scarlet Empress. UNI.
The Searchers. WB.
Seven Samurai. Can:VC. US:MAB.
The Shooting. Can:MMP. US:WR.
Sleeping-Car Murders. MAB.
State of Siege. Can:FM. US:C5.
The Stone Flower. Can:AST. US:MAB.
Strike Me Pink. Can:BEL. US:SGS.
Tales of Hoffman. WR.
That Cold Day in the Park. MAB & SEL.
They Might be Giants. UNI.
This Happy Breed. JAN.
The Tomb of Ligea. Can:AST. US:MAB.
A Touch of Class. SWK.
Traffic. Can:CPX. US:COL.
The Trip. MAB.
Two Mules for Sister Sara. UNI.
Wavelength. Can:CDC. US:MMA.
The Wedding March. IFD.
Who's That Knocking at my Door. PRS.
The Wild Angels. MAB.
You Only Live Twice. UA.
Z. Can:CPX. US:C5.

ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS
Ballad of Cable Hogue. (Vol. 3 No. 10) MAB.
Fahrenheit 451. (Vol. 3 No. 10) MAB.
Sands of Iwo Jima. (Vol. 3 No. 11) IVY.
You Only Live Once. (Vol. 3 No. 10) MAB.

AIP: American International Pictures, 9033 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Cal. 90211.
AST: Astral Films, 224 Davenport Rd., Toronto 5.
BEL: Bellevue Film Distributors, 277 Victoria St., Toronto 2.
C5: Cinema Five, 595 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
CAN: Canyon Cinema Coop, Room 220, Industrial Center Bldg., Sausalito, Cal. 94965.
CDC: Canadian Film-Makers' Distribution Ctr., Room 204, 341 Bloor West, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1W8.
CFI: Canadian Film Institute, 1762 Carling Ave., Ottawa 13.
CMH: Contemporary Films/McGraw Hill, Princeton Rd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520.
COL: Columbia Cinematheque, 711 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
CON: Continental Film Distributing, 241 E. 34th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.
CPX: Cinepix, 8275 Mayrand, Montreal.
FAR: Faroun Films, 136 St. Paul St. E., Montreal 127.
FF: France Film, 1405 Alexandre de Sève, Montreal, Quebec.
FI: Films Inc., 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. 60091.
FM: Films Mutuels, 225 Roy St. E., Montreal.
GEN: Genesis Films, 40 West 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.
HCW: Hurlock Cine World, 13 Arcadia Rd., Old Greenwich, Conn. 06870.
IFD: International Film Distributors, 20 Bloor St. W., Toronto 5.
IVY: Ivy Films, 165 W. 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.
JAN: Janus Films, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
LAP: Lapointe Films, 4651 rue St. Denis, Montreal 176.
MAB: MacMillan Audio Brandon, 34 MacQuesten Parkway South, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10550.
MGM: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, 696 Yonge St., Toronto 5.
MMA: Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.
MMP: Marlin Motion Pictures, 47 Lakeshore Rd. E., Port Credit, Ont.
NG: National General Pictures, 42 Charles St. East, Toronto, and 600 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
NYF: New Yorker Films, 43 West 61st St., New York, N.Y. 10023.
PAR: Paramount Pictures, Toronto Star Building, 1 Yonge St., Toronto 220.
PHO: Phoenix Films, Suite 207, 730 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario.
PRS: Peerless Films, 1070 Bleury, Montreal, Quebec.
RAD: Radim/Film Images, 17 West 60th St., New York, N.Y. 10023.
RBC: RBC Films, 933 N. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, Cal. 90038.
SEL: Select Films, 115 West 31st Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.
SGS: Sam Goldwyn Films, 1041 N. Formosa Ave., Los Angeles, Cal. 90046.
SWK: Swank Motion Pictures, 201 S. Jefferson Ave. St. Louis, Mo. 63166.
TSL: Topsoil Films, Suite 300, 834 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario.
UA: United Artists Corp., Ste. 800, 2180 Yonge St., Toronto 7. United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.
UNI: Universal Films, 2450 Victoria Park Ave., Willowdale 425. Universal 16, 445 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
VC: Visual Consultants, 72 Carlton St., Toronto 2.
WB: Warner Brothers Distributing, 70 Carlton St., Toronto 2. Warner Brothers 16, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Cal. 91505.
WR: Walter Reade 16, 241 E. 34th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

*16mm prints may not yet be available. While based on sources we believe reliable and up-to-date, *Take One* cannot guarantee the accuracy of any of the above information, nor assume any liability for the results of any misinformation given. We will be happy to print additions and corrections in future issues.

16 mm News

A new column of information for those among our readers who regularly book 16mm films for classroom, film society, etc. Distributors are invited to send word of new releases, etc. to 16mm News, Take One, Box 1778, Station B, Montreal, Quebec H3B 3L3. We'll print as much of it as we can.

The Tricontinental Film Center (244 West 27th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001 212-989-3330) has a couple of new hour-long documentaries on Chile: **Introduction to Chile** (a Chilean-Cuban co-production, directed by Miguel Torres, it constitutes a historical over-view of the struggle between Chile's working class and peasants and the land-owning upper class), and **When the People Awake** (which examines the political dynamics of Chile under Allende's Popular Unity government). Tricontinental's California office, by the way, is at P.O. Box 4430, Berkeley 94704 (415-548-3204).

solid knowledge of craft. The entertainers of the '50s still had Hollywood's original craftsmen to lend their lifetimes of experience. Now that craft has been lost — which is an exciting challenge — it means that a new craft must be evolved, and the process will hold new excitements with each step. We can already see it happening. Directors like Peter Bogdanovich, Francis Coppola, and James Bridges are just beginning to explore these new definitions of form. The period of transition has begun.

The point is that the bottom has already been hit, and the industry promises once again to be a young industry, as in the '20s, with long careers ahead to mature and evolve. The question is one of timetables. How long will the public be amused by benign entertainments before it again demands serious strides into the unknown?

1973 was characterized by entertainment that looked backward for its inspiration: **Paper Moon**, **A Touch of Class**, **American Graffiti**. Mellow, very mellow. 1974 is to mark the return of science fiction. Science fiction is firmly based in entertainment values, playing artfully with our fantasies, and yet looks ahead speculatively — but not insistently. Science fiction provided this same function in the 1950s.

The most positive sign of 1973 was **The Paper Chase**: fully entertaining and easily misinterpreted as reactionary, it is intelligent and even challenging. And it has a formal integrity of its own that should embarrass those who only create illusions of formal integrity by imitating the old masters. The number of formal elements is very consciously limited, like Bresson, admittedly not through the profound simplification of an old master, but modestly as an artist will master a few careful choices in his new vocabulary before going on to more complex assignments.

We are in for a period of simplicity while our artists learn the new rules of a young medium. But this time we will not have to wait 20 or 30 years for the complexity of high art — because the new filmmakers (contrary to the liberals before them) have bothered to study that very rich fabric which is the American film heritage.

The hero of the last decade becomes Andy Warhol — not because of his mock decadence, but because he saw, before everyone else, the necessity of starting again at the beginning. What many interpreted as the ultimate rejection of Hollywood was, of course and in fact, an affectionate embracing of the whole evolution of the medium — a willingness to retrace the steps.

Oh, yes, it's a sad time, because Sam Peckinpah can only see the death all around us and the cop pictures are too

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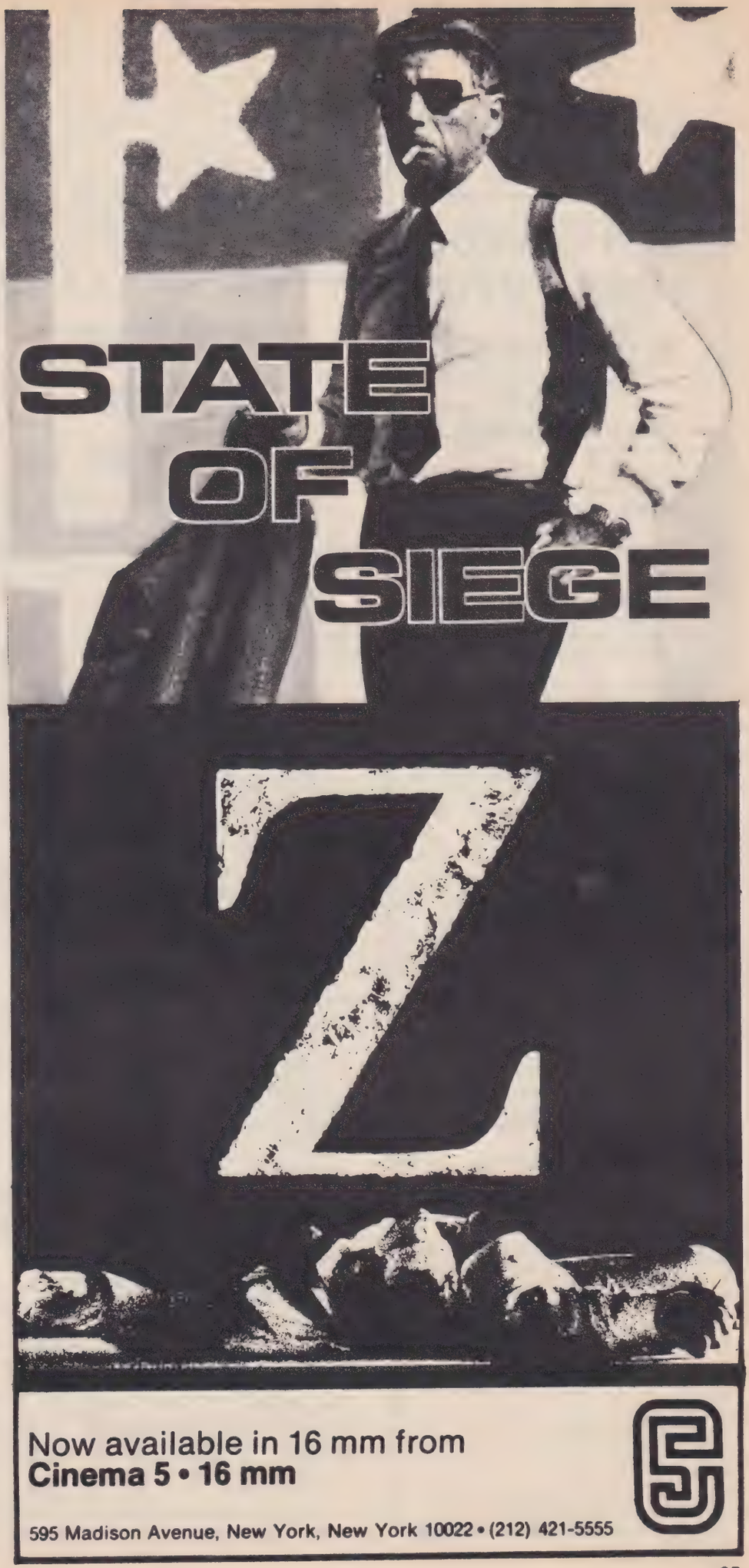
John Dorr – a Los Angeles-based independent filmmaker – is a frequent contributor to our pages.



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degrading even to watch, because we are not yet ready to recognize the rebirth, because we were disillusioned, because we mistook the prophets of the '60s as the messiahs of the coming age. But hold on, dear brothers and sisters. It's beginning. We in Hollywood who have waited so long can feel it beginning — and this time on a solid basis, so there will be no disillusionment. The ride may be more pleasant than we ever imagined.

John H. Dorr

Letter from Prison

I saw Don Siegel's **Invasion of the Body Snatchers** at the post theatre when I was in the Army. From that day on I became a Siegel fan. He could do no wrong.

I first set eyes on "actor" Clint Eastwood when he played the role of a brainless trail hand in a forgettable western series on tv. Then he popped up again in a string of spaghetti westerns in which his characterizations were uniformly flat — the vacuous smile of his tv days had deteriorated to an equally inexpressive grimace, and he projected about as much emotion as a tired hooker. The Eastwood name in a movie ad was all it took to turn me off.

As the years passed, I went out of my way to see Don Siegel's pictures and avoided any movie low-class enough to have Clint Eastwood in it. Some of Siegel's films left a lot to be desired, but I was sure that a Don Siegel film at its worst *had* to be better than Clint Eastwood films at their best.

I was probably right.

Then along came **Coogan's Bluff**, a picture directed by Don Siegel and starring Clint Eastwood. I might have been faced with a dilemma, but I was a "resident" at the Walled-off Astoria, Leavenworth, Kansas, at the time. Few prisoners, least of all movie addicts like myself, passed up the weekly screenings, so even Clint Eastwood couldn't keep me away.

And I wasn't sorry I went to see it. **Coogan's Bluff** turned out to be an entertaining picture, and Eastwood's range under Siegel's direction seemed to have been expanded slightly. They teamed again on a pot-boiler western, **Two Mules for Sister Sara**, and followed that with **The Beguiled**, a really beautiful film in which Eastwood stopped giving actors a bad name.

Unfortunately, they didn't stop there. They paired again for **Dirty Harry**, the picture I've been zeroing in on since I started writing this piece. After the screening, I walked back to my cell with a sour taste in my mouth. I didn't feel angry — I felt betrayed. It was as though I'd just found out my best friend was a narc.

Siegel has directed other films with police protagonists. **Madigan** with Richard Widmark had a detective hero not unlike **Dirty Harry**. My complaint isn't with the movie's viewpoint. My gripe is that the film is a piece of reactionary propaganda into which lies and half-truths (both visual and verbal) have been intentionally woven. The result is the audience does not get the realistic look at the behind-the-scenes attitudes and actions of police that they think they are getting. Instead, they are fed a bunch of crap that has been carefully designed to reinforce old misconceptions and implant new ones.

On his way to lunch, sharp-eyed Dirty Harry, as played by Eastwood, spots a car parked in front of a bank with a man behind the wheel and the motor running. In the street are about a dozen cigarette butts, so this means the car is a getaway vehicle, and the driver has been waiting for some time. No one seems to have realized that even a two-cigarette armed robbery would be a long, long armed robbery, or that a more likely explanation for a pile of cigarette ends in the street would be that someone had emptied his automobile ashtray.

But all probabilities aside, the scene has been set for Eastwood to single-handedly foil a bank robbery. The bandits are played by black men, a touch the NAACP will surely applaud. What better way to elevate the Negro image? Instead of casting blacks as lowly dope pushers or muggers, they are allowed to bungle a crime that carries higher criminal status. Race relations take a giant step forward.

The picture straightens out its audience's thinking about police brutality, too. Eastwood doesn't beat on any heads that don't have it coming, and the bad guy tries to blame Eastwood for injuries he didn't inflict. So, the next time the audience reads about someone who claims to have been mistreated by the police, they will know he either deserved it, or it didn't really happen.

Policemen are in many ways like emergency-room doctors. They have to harden themselves, become objective, in order to do their jobs properly. Unfortunately, it doesn't work for police in the same way it works for doctors. Policemen, prison guards, asylum keepers (and until the spotlight of public awareness was turned on by numerous abuses, this was true of U.S. Marine Corps drill instructors, too) all follow the same path. No matter how high or humanitarian their original motives may be, their charges have one thing in common — an utter lack of power — and the man with the authority first

becomes careless, then callous, then cruel. Attempts, such as **Dirty Harry**, to make this disgusting phenomenon palatable make me want to vomit.

The movie's plot hinges on having the mad-dog killer released because of technicalities provided by U.S. Supreme Court decisions. **Dirty Harry** is the kind of horror story police departments threatened would happen if they had to abide by decisions like *Miranda vs. Arizona* and *Escobedo vs. Illinois*. However, the fact is, the so-called Warren Court didn't make new law. It simply reaffirmed existing laws that were being ignored. The police were *forced* to show restraint, and control, and respect for citizen's rights — something they were *supposed* to have been doing all along.

But there has always been a big difference between what is *supposed* to be and what actually is. Given the circumstances of the movie, there is absolutely *no* chance that a real-life murderer would have been released, regardless of any law or lack of it. There isn't a man alive who can tell the police, "I did it, but you can't prove it," or its equivalent and expect to go free. The same is true for any situation where the police "know" a person is guilty, but lack sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction in the courts. That's why the Miranda and Escobedo cases were needed. They helped limit abuses of police power.

I've never heard a man in prison claim he was innocent, but I've heard hundreds complain that they were framed — there *is* a distinction. Also, I've heard an equal number complain that, though they were guilty, it wasn't of the offense that brought their prison sentences. This is because police agencies are reluctant to allow any known criminal to go free when they are sure he's guilty of some crime. If he can't be convicted of the main offense, they simply dip into the Criminal Code and find a few dozen other violations they can tailor to fit.

In **Dirty Harry** there were numerous secondary charges that were ignored so that the villain could cheat Justice. That's not dramatic license — that's propaganda. If a film has a bias, it should be apparent. When that bias is put forth with lies, it is propaganda at its worst. The beauty of the underground films is that their built-in bias is always clear, something you can seldom say for establishment efforts.

Unlike the movies, you can pick and choose with the printed word. If an author rambles, if he starts to preach when he should be listing data, the reader can skip ahead a few paragraphs until the writer gets back on the subject. The audience at a movie doesn't have this option.

Albert Nussbaum, 38 years old and formerly one of the FBI's Ten Most Wanted men, is presently serving a 40-year stretch at the US penitentiary at Marion, Illinois for multiple bank robberies. He writes for a wide range of periodicals, including Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine *and* The American Scholar.

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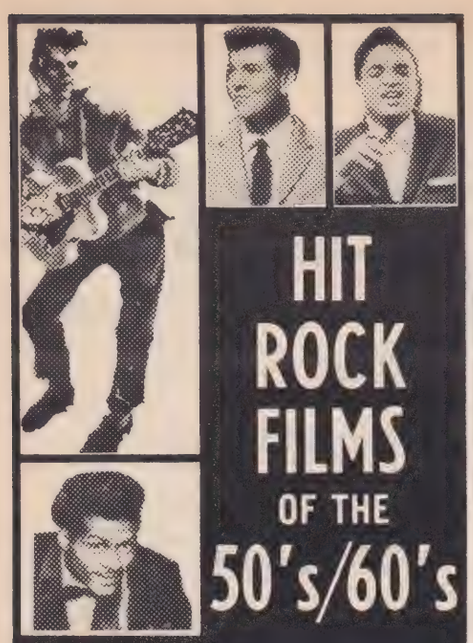

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Unless someone gets up to buy popcorn, he is subjected to the complete film. The control over the input to his mind is gone. He can't skip ahead, so he takes it all in — the true, the false, the half-truths, the overt, and the subliminal. And, because film is better at conveying emotions than facts, he will in even the best of circumstances find films more often emotional than factual.

The power of the filmmaker over his captive audience is not unlike the power of a policeman over a person arrested. It's possible for a filmmaker to become contemptuous of the 12-year-old mentalities he imagines are his audience. The end result could very well be something like **Dirty Harry**.

Don Siegel is one of the elite of the art and craft of filmmaking. It's impossible to see his films and not recognize his talent and skill. Much as I abhor what he did with **Dirty Harry**, I have to marvel at how well he did it.

Albert F. Nussbaum

A Filmmaker's Column

The Eye is a Theatre

Although I feel a strong affinity for the cinema of Godzilla and Howard Duff, it sometimes strikes me funny that writers with perfectly good minds should devote so much energy to studying this kind of film work. The obvious comment here is: to each his own. I couldn't agree more, but I do feel that there's more to learn about filmmaking from the cinema of Brakhage, Snow, Baillie, or Kubelka, to name a few contemporary film artists.

Part of the reason for the concentration by modern film critics, in publications like this one, on theatrical melodrama is the fact that no suitable vocabulary exists to help them describe the works of the alternative cinema. I'll return to this point in a moment, but I should also point out that the works of dozens of good independent filmmakers, like those above, are really very hard to get to see, while — with little or no effort — you can see the latest melodrama or comedy at any downtown or neighborhood theatre.

Perhaps it's the real lack of cinema tradition that has made filmmaking and film criticism so tradition-bound. It's like a starving man reaching for hard-to-get food. But film is a very young form. It's only eighty years old. Writers who refer to the classical period of Hollywood film, or silent days, are as far as I am concerned, a little myopic.

The form the commercial melodramatic film first took, many years ago, is not at all unexpected. After all, it was the vaudeville theatres which were turned into cinemas. It is my feeling that this commercially-monopolized medium is only one kind of subspecies of filmmaking, one which has received an inordinate amount of attention simply because of its proximity.

The most stimulating work by the advanced independent film artists explores the relationship of the medium of filmmaking and the eye-brain. In fact, these kinds of films include the eye-brain in the entire filmmaking system. Although it may seem that I am confining my discussion to technically abstruse films like **Wave Length**, I would be much more inclined to include work that is less abstract because it deals with the majority of human experience, the mundane. Good examples of films like this are Bruce Baillie's **Quick Billie**, or any of the numerous Brakhage films about family life.

I've maintained a deep interest in the technology of filmmaking because I am a filmmaker who has had a technical education. So I was delighted by my discovery of a book called, *Optics, the Science of Vision*, by Vasco Ronchi (New York University Press, 1957). Although the book is aimed at the physicist, there are many non-mathematical pages devoted to an historical overview of optics, and some very good discussions about the inclusion of the eye-brain or mind in the optical system.

Ronchi's major thesis is that the science of optics must include the eye-brain as well as the rest of the optical system under discussion. While this may seem a simple statement, or in fact definition, this is not the way optics is taught in schools, and it is not the way most people working in the subject view it. Perhaps the most immediate benefit of Ronchi's studies has been the vast improvement in sharpness in catadioptric lenses, or in plain English, long focal length mirror lenses. Designers have been able to exceed the criterion of resolution laid down by Lord Rayleigh. When nobody thought it was possible to make sharper lenses, nobody tried. But Ronchi showed clearly that the Rayleigh limit was arbitrary, not entirely taking into account the part played by the eye-brain.

Now, how does any of this help the filmmaker or film writer? I believe that by including the eye-brain in the filmmaking system, we can develop the necessary language that would enable us to study the advanced films of the independent artist. Our present terms and vocabulary — built on a literary and theatrical basis — cannot cope with the new filmmaking. Critics who write about these films from the literary point of view drilled into them after countless hours of English literature courses, or countless hours spent in neighborhood cinemas, are ill-equipped

Lenny Lipton is the author of Independent Filmmaking. *He was the film columnist for* The Berkeley Barb *during its first four years of publication. He has made 18 films, and wrote "Puff, the Magic Dragon".*

for the task at hand.

The traditional way of teaching camera function is to compare the camera to an eye. Quite a good comparison can be made. The lens of the eye is like the lens of the camera, the retina is like photosensitive film, and so on. Sometimes, even, the eye is explained in terms of the camera; for instance, in basic books on biology.

I don't know which side of the analogy was used first. That is, historically, whether or not the eye was first used to explain camera function or vice versa. In any event, I have no quarrel with this useful didactic device, but I hope the approach I am taking turns out to be more fruitful.

This eye-camera traditional analogy is essentially passive. A dynamic approach would include the eye-brain as part of the operative system. Instead, lets put it this way: The eye is a theatre. The world of the visual field is a movie. The lens of the eye is the lens of the movie projector. The retina is the theatre screen. The mind is the audience. The mind watches the world projected on the two retinas, and from these images synthesizes an effigy of the world, which we like to call the real world.

This discussion must be continued in the next column, in which I will apply this idea to the relationship between the eye-brain's background noise, and the background noise of motion picture and television systems. *Lenny Lipton*

Coffee, Brandy & Cigars

Did you know that the theatre in Berlin that world-premiered Fritz Lang's **Metropolis** in 1926 had its entire front glitteringly metallicized for the event?

Did you know that von Sternberg planned a film in 1932 with Marlene Dietrich called **The Hurricane** in which she was to play a circus entertainer with a trained horse act? Von Sternberg and his cameramen, Paul Ivano and Lucien Ballard, went to the Caribbean that November where they shot 50,000 feet of backgrounds in Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica and Santo Domingo while waiting in vain for a hurricane to materialize. Paramount offered to give them a studio-made hurricane, but Sternberg rejected the idea and abandoned the project. (His next picture with Dietrich was **The Scarlet Empress**.)

Did you know that Carl Dreyer, after the box office flop of **The Passion of Joan of Arc**, could not get another film to do and supported himself writing a column of legal news for a Copenhagen

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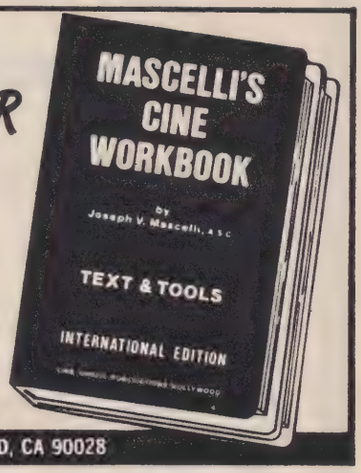

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paper? He made no film for 11 years, from 1932 to 1943. Luis Buñuel had the same problem for 15 years, 1932-1947, during which he made no film. As for von Stroheim, he made none for 25 years (1932-1957). And Flaherty, in a career spanning 30 years, made exactly five features (four, if you want to be technical about it).

When Flaubert said, "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!" and Sternberg said, "Marlene is me — all my characters are me!", they were merely echoing the ancient Taoist dictum that an artist, when he is rendering a subject, should himself become that subject.

Did you know that Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Viennese philosopher whose ideas revolutionized Western thought, loved cowboy films and silent movies with happy endings?

And that two of the twentieth century's most prestigious practitioners of *belles lettres,* Jorge Luis Borges and Walter Starkie (who recently re-translated *Don Quixote*), were admirers of the films of von Sternberg?

And did you know that Albert Einstein once described his idea of an ideal occupation as being that of a lighthouse keeper? (In which he endeared himself forever to me. His second dictum that endeared him to me was his skepticism of the medical profession.)

Recently seeing that *rara avis* of Jean Renoir, the short **Charleston**, made in 1927, right after **Nana** (both starring Catherine Hessling, and both delicious), reminded me of an even more *rara avis* that I saw around 1930 — a short, **Frankie and Johnny**, co-starring Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester doing a parody of that famous bar-room ballad, an absolute delight.

And re-seeing **Pandora's Box** of Pabst, with the almost preternaturally enticing Louise Brooks as Lulu, certainly showed up **Last Tango in Paris** as small potatoes where sex is concerned.

Love 'Em and Leave 'Em, an early Louise Brooks film that was no great shakes as a picture, had one charming title, when a girl (Evelyn Brent), who has lost her boyfriend to another girl only to have him come back to her again, says, "I never thought I'd get run over by the same truck twice."

Did you know that Chaplin and Cantinflas are currently discussing a possible film together? Also worth waiting to see: Cantinflas as Sancho Panza in a parody of **Don Quixote**, that he has made. And, as delightful as anything ever on the screen, was the parody of all officers' batmen in the person of the guard outside the door of the Russian general (George Siegmann) in Mauritz Stiller's **Hotel Imperial**, also re-seen recently.

And if it appears I've been mentioning only old films recently, I can report on a new one, Truffaut's **La Nuit Américaine**, a film about the making of a film. All the running about in it and the parallels between real-life and reel-life kept reminding me, disconcertingly, of another film in which there's a lot of running about and in which there are also parallels (master-servant), and if you've already guessed that I was thinking of **La Règle de Jeu** you're darn right — and what modern film can stand up against *that* one?

Fritz Lang has now been decorated by the governments of Austria, Germany, France and Italy.

One new film (how new must a film be these days to still be "new") that I liked very much was, of course, the "old-new" **Playtime** of Jacques Tati. While not up to the divine wackiness of **Traffic**, it is still the best comedy around in a *genre* that is becoming increasingly rare, alas, alas! The character of Mr. Hulot is one of the most inspired and endearing comic creations of the twentieth century, and it is all because Tati is basically a poet, like all great comedians have always been. Come what may, *merci Dieu,* there will always be poets.

Along with *Take One*, my favorite film periodicals are *Movietone News Quarterly,* published by the Seattle Film Society, edited by R.C. Dale, at 5236 18th Ave. NE, Seattle, Washington 98105; *Views and Reviews*, a quarterly edited by Jon Tuska, at 633 W. Wisconsin, Suite 1700, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203; and Bill Starr's monthly *Film Critic* (ex-*Film Society Review*), official organ of the AFFS, now at 333 Ave. of the Americas, New York 10014. I read all the film periodicals, of course, but if I were marooned on that proverbial desert island, or doing duty as a lighthouse keeper, I'd be most curious to see a complete file of back issues of the ones I've named.

A book I recommend is Penelope Gilliatt's *Unholy Fools,* a compilation of articles and essays by her on what she calls "wits, comics, disturbers of the peace." Her chapters on Tati, Congreve, Judy Holliday, Marilyn Monroe, Ophuls and Jean Renoir are especially rewarding, the ones on Renoir being, for me, the most illuminating writing anyone has done on this genial and very great director. There is a fine book by Bazin on Renoir, but if you want to know your subject before getting into the "metaphysics" of him, read Gilliatt. She also writes the most patrician prose of any of the practicing critics on the periodic journals, and that's no small thing in this era of flip, glib journalese. The accent is by no means on the films, the theatre being also served. All in all, rewarding for the time you will give it. (Viking Press, New York; in Canada, William Collins)

Another book I recommend as highly

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been U.S. correspondent for Sight & Sound *as well as* Cahiers du Cinéma, *and published several books on the cinema.*

is Jean Mitry's new *Histoire du cinéma muet* (1923-30) — copiously and carefully illustrated with 133 stills. At this late date to come out with a detailed (630 pages, if you please!) history of the silent film takes courage — and I know of no one else who could be trusted for thoroughness and accuracy to the extent Mitry can. When one realizes that this is the third volume in a series of which the first two covered the periods 1895-1914 and 1915-1925, you know you are in the presence of a scholar of the first water indeed. If you are equal to the French text, this book will be equal to you — in spades. (Editions Universitaires, Paris)

In the chapter on d'Arrast in *Saint Cinema,* I included **A Gentleman of Paris** among the six films by him that were lost. This was written before I'd been shown a print of it by David Shepard, who found it when he was performing his miracle-findings for the American Film Institute. I overlooked adding a footnote to this effect in the new edition of the book, for which I apologize to him and to my readers. After more than 40 years, it was still a charmer.

Works currently in progress: biographies of Fritz Lang by Lotte Eisner, Rex Ingram by Liam O'Leary, John Gilbert by Leatrice Fountain; and two by me, *Stroheim: A Pictorial Record* (Dover, New York) and *The Complete* ***Wedding March*** (Little Brown, Boston), both scheduled for mid '74.

And did you know that Abel Gance was invited to China by Mao-Tse-Tung, who admired his **Napoleon**? They were to have discussions hopefully leading to Gance doing a vast epic film on the Chinese leader. It never happened.

Herman G. Weinberg

Books

International Index to Film Periodicals (1972), edited by Karen Jones. Bowker. 344 pages. $17.95.
The British Film Catalogue (1895-1970), by Denis Gifford. McGraw-Hill. Pages unnumbered. $51.25.

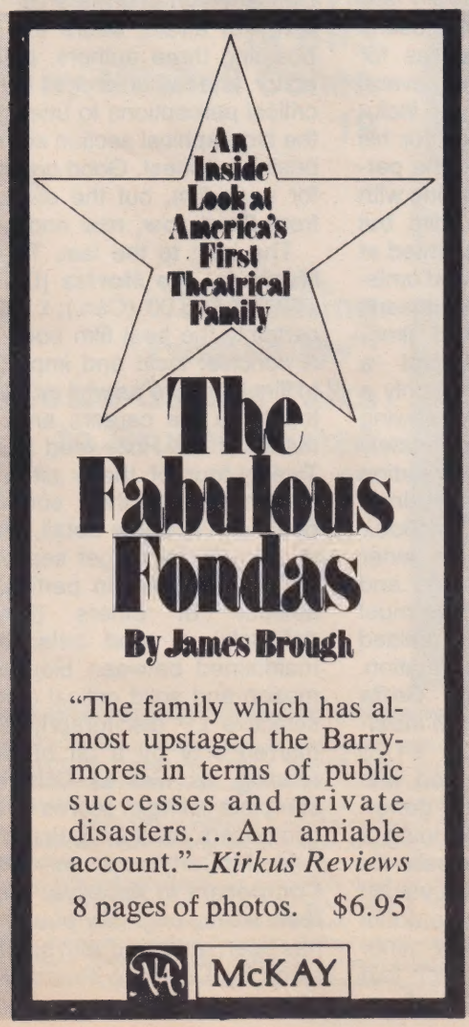
Two reference works without which any serious film library is as incomplete as a theatre that doesn't sell popcorn.

The ***Index to Film Periodicals***, much anticipated since Bowker first announced the project a couple of years back, provides an annotated listing of the articles, reviews, essays, interviews, etc. published — during 1972 — in 59 of the world's film magazines (including *Take One*). The entries are arranged by film title, by film personality, and by subject (subject headings include: Festivals, Film Industry Economics, Psychological Effects of Films, Law, History, etc.). It is unfortunate, only, that there's no index of authors' and critics' names, but — otherwise — the film archivists of 24 countries who put the ***Index*** together, and Karen Jones (Librarian of the Danish Film Museum) who coordinated, are all to be congratulated for having produced a useful and reasonably-priced research tool.

Equally useful, if a trifle more expensive (and a lot bulkier — I estimate about 800 pages), is ***The British Film Catalogue***. Denis Gifford (the British cartoonist and author of, among other books, *A Pictorial History of Horror Movies*) has come up with a chronological listing of some 14,000 films, shorts and feature-length, "produced for public entertainment" — every one ever made in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Not included are advertising and educational films, newsreels, travelogues, films made specifically for television or (most to be regretted) "amateur" films (unless they were made in 35mm).

The result of some 15 years of poring through old newspapers and magazines, supplemented by interviews with filmmakers and performers from the pioneering early years, the ***Catalogue***'s entries provide as much data on each film as could be found: date, title (including subsequent changes), length, colour system, ratio, production and distribution companies, date of any reissue, names of producer, director, screenwriter, narrator and cast, source of the story, any awards won, and a brief summary of the plot. There's also an index to film titles at the back.

E. Anderson, formerly an ad-agency executive in California, now operates a liquor store in upper New York State.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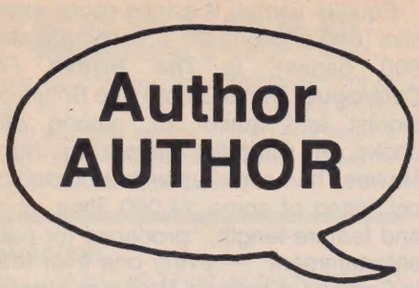

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While not quite as comprehensive as *The American Film Institute Catalog* (of which only the 2500-page 1921-1930 installment has so far appeared), ***The British Film Catalogue*** serves as an essential companion-volume. Now then, when is someone going to get to work on the filmographies of such countries as France, Italy, Germany, Japan and Russia? *E. Anderson*

John Russell Taylor's and Arthur Jackson's ***The Hollywood Musical*** [Secker and Warburg, $15.95 (in Canada); £4.00 (in Great Britain); McGraw-Hill, $12.95 (in U.S.)] should really be much better than it in fact proves to be on closer examination. Taylor's ninety-page essay which prefaces the book cries out for expansion and detailing, though his perspective is generally sound.

The bulk of the volume consists of four reference sections: an index with appropriate filmographies for over 1,100 personalities associated with the genre; an index of songs (some 2,750) which is keyed numerically to a further listing of film titles, permitting (hopefully) ready identification of a given song's film source. So far, so good, though if Jane Powell were indeed born in Saskatchewan, as Jackson states, we've been missing out for all these years in not listing her along with Durbin, Pidgeon *et al* as one of us.

Where the reference section really fails miserably is in its most potentially useful section, the detailed filmographies for 275 selected films. Ignoring the several questionable entries selected for inclusion, one congratulates Jackson for his attempt to list all the songs and the performers thereof in a given film, along with the usual cast and technical credits, but can only be enormously disappointed at the incredible number of errors and omissions. Granted this is not by any means an easy task, as most standard filmographies do not even attempt a performer-song identification and only a very good memory or a recent viewing of a film can help. Jackson unfortunately perpetuates too much misinformation carried over from Jack Burton's fascinating, but thoroughly unreliable *Blue Book of Hollywood Musicals*, but the inner margins are wide and corrections and additions can be easily noted. We must now await Miles Kreuger's long promised volume to hopefully correct the situation.

John Kobal's ***Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance: a pictorial history of film musicals*** [Hamlyn, $6.95 (Can.); £1.75 (G.B.)] is a fine survey, crammed with absolutely fascinating stills, and generally excellent text, laudably including a brief section on foreign film musicals. It's unfortunate that the Czechoslovakian printing job is so lustreless, but no doubt economics so dictated. Very few minor errors, though we might have been told that **The March of Time**, from which we have several stunning stills, was in fact never released as such, and on p. 139 **Shoot the Chutes** must be **Strike Me Pink**.

Donald Knox's ***The Magic Factory: How MGM made "An American in Paris"*** [Praeger, $9.95; $11.50 (Can.)] had the potential to be an absolutely first rate contribution to film scholarship. The source material is all here, but it's so very badly organized and shaped that one loses all interest almost immediately. Granted we're still given a fair amount of insight into the highly intricate workings of a big studio in its heyday, and now that MGM's death knell is sounding, as it sadly approaches its 50th Anniversary, this does have a certain value. We also gain some inkling as to why this particular film has for some of us at least such a still-born air about it. I do deplore, however, the unnecessary demeanment of the memory of ace arranger Conrad Salinger, whom we're finally beginning to recognize as the man almost totally responsible for the glorious unique sound of the MGM musical, that one encounters in these pages.

The Busby Berkeley Book, by Tony Thomas and Jim Terry, with Busby Berkeley [New York Graphic, $14.95; $16.95 (Can.)] is most welcome for its sumptuously reproduced selection of stills illustrating Berkeley's output, and all praise to the designers of the volume, Don Sheldon and Marshall Berland. The text, I'm afraid, bears the evidence of boasting three authors, plus a credited editor, and rather lurches from cool, clear critical perceptions to utter gush, though the biographical section still remains surprisingly honest. Good credits and notes for each film, but the still on p. 162 is from **Row, row, row** and not as noted.

The best to the last. Tony Thomas's ***Music for the Movies*** [Barnes/Tantivy, $12.00; $15.00 (Can.); £4.50 (G.B.)] is certainly the best film book of the year. A concise, lucid and important addition to film literature as well as a long overdue tribute to the careers and accomplishments of the Hollywood film composer. Twenty-four of these often overlooked craftsmen and their contributions are dealt with in some detail, and while one might wish for longer sections on some (Alfred Newman, in particular) and the deletion of others (Lalo Schifrin, definitely) a good balance is always maintained between biographical information and solid critical commentary. A selective LP discography is appended, marred only by a bit of sloppy proofreading, as well as Clifford McCarty's complete listing of scores by the principal composers dealt with. Bravo!

Mr. McCarty's own very important ***Film Composers in America: a checklist of their work***, originally published in 1952, has been re-issued with some minor revisions by Da Capo Press [$8.95; $9.40 (Can.)] *Glen W. Hunter*

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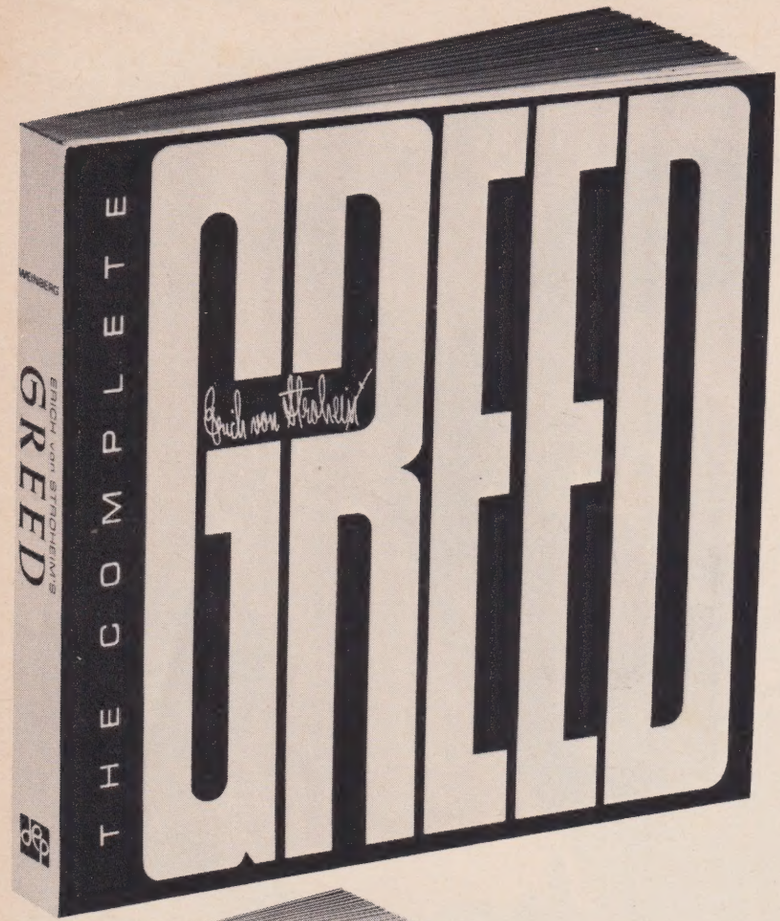

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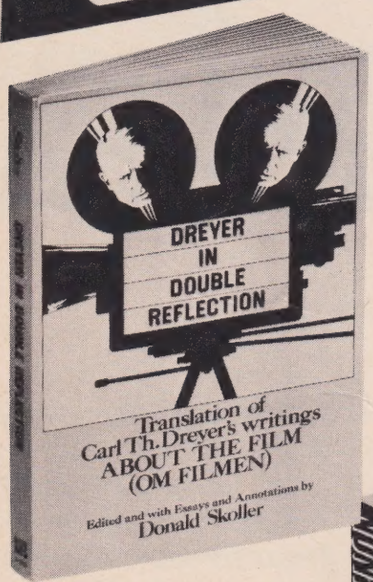

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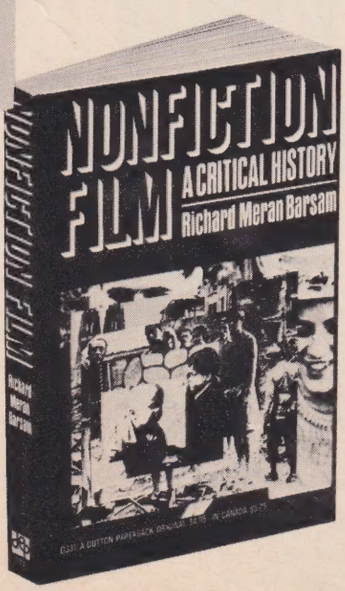

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